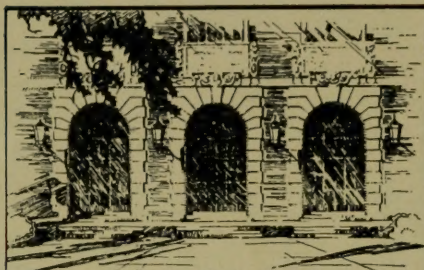


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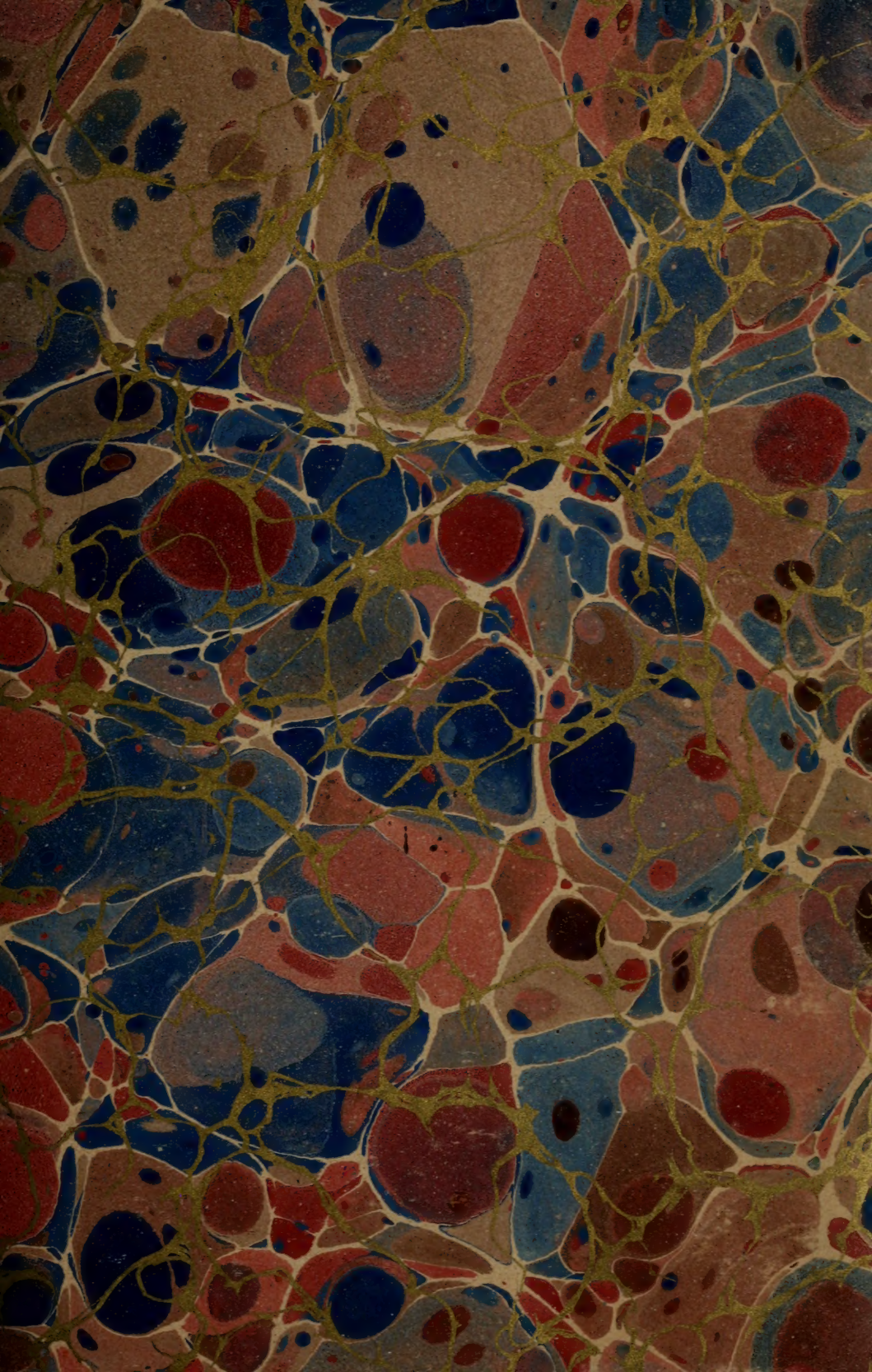




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V. 1

LET us (since life can little more supply  
Than just to look about us, and to die)  
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of Man ;  
A mighty maze ! but not without a plan ;  
A wild where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,  
Or garden tempting with forbidden fruit.  
Together let us beat this ample field,  
Try what the open, what the covert yield ;  
The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore,  
Of all who blindly creep or sightless soar ;  
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
And catch the manners living as they rise ;  
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,  
But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

Say first, of God above or Man below  
What can we reason but from what we know?  
Of Man what see we but his station here,  
From which to reason or to which refer?  
Through worlds unnumber'd though the God be known,  
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.  
He who through vast immensity can pierce,  
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,  
Observe how system into system runs,  
What other planets circle other suns,  
What varied being peoples every star,  
May tell why heav'n has made us as we are:  
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,  
The strong connexions, nice dependencies,  
Gradations just, has thy prevading soul  
Look'd through; or can a part contain the whole?

Leandro Pay 10457 Bimmel = 3r

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,  
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee ?  
. . . . .

When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains  
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains ;  
When the dull ox why now he breaks the clod,  
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God ;  
Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend  
His actions, passions, being, use, and end ;  
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd ; and why  
This hour a slave, the next a diety.  
. . . . .

Then say not Man's imperfect, Heaven in fault ;  
Say rather Man's as perfect as he ought ;  
His knowledge measured to his state and place ;  
His time a moment, and a point his space.

POPE.



## P R E F A C E.

“As in men so in books, the soul is all with which our souls must deal; and the soul of the book is whatsoever beautiful, and true, and noble we can find in it.”—CANON KINGSLEY.

“I AM desirous,” says Benjamin Disraeli, in the introduction to his psychological romance *CON-  
TARINI FLEMING*, “of writing a book which shall be all truth: a work to which the passion, the thought, the action, and even the style should spring from my own experience of feeling, from the meditations of my own intellect, from my own observation of incident, from my own study of the genius of expression.” This has also been my object in writing the following pages, which have sprung, as it were, naturally out of those of “*The Honeymoon*.” In that romance I tried to picture the struggle of a noble spirit chafing against the fetters of modern churches; whilst at the same time it feels an almost womanlike tenderness for the bonds it is endeavouring to shake off.

This book may be considered as the counterpoise and completion of "The Honeymoon."

The battle between exact knowledge and orthodoxy has been waged for many long years, until science has shown a tendency to drag mankind into blank, cold materialistic atheism, and blind faith to draw it towards superstition and implicit belief in the incredible. Hence the world is prepared for the advent of religious ideas founded upon facts, which every man can prove for himself, and which can reconcile the discoveries of science with the revelations of God as given in the Bible, and other inspired writings.

Modern philosophy, with its partial discoveries, has infused into the breast of man a spirit of scepticism ; whilst, on the other side, dogmatic theology would fain prevent the expansion of his ideas, which the growth of knowledge in this century of progress so inevitably contributes to enlarge. For my own part I believe there is much truth on both sides, and that, ere long, science will embrace a higher field, and become more speculative, and that when we know more, we shall believe more ; whilst the churches will, on their side, become more liberal and progressive, and yielding to science will help philosophy in the



struggle to penetrate the dark veil which has so long veiled our destiny.

There have been many theories formed and re-formed to explain the great mysteries of creation and existence. What am I? How am I? Where do I come from? and whither am I going?—but in spite of Darwin, Tyndall, and Agassiz, I doubt very much if we are nearer the truth now than when Moses wrote the first chapters of Genesis.

Man, by himself, will never arrive at a complete comprehension of these things, but God has given us His revelation to assist us, why should we despise it and seek elsewhere for the truth which, if we “*search the Scriptures,*” as we have been told to do, we shall be sure to find, has been declared to us already, according to the degree of our perceptive faculties.

“Progress being infinite, and man being a progressive being, it is evident that, as no formula can ever be an exhaustive expression to him of truth in any branch of knowledge, no formula can ever be final; and, consequently, no doctrine can ever be anything more than a summing up of the attainment of some given epoch of human thought, or can ever be useful except as stepping-stone to farther progress.

“Hence the need of a succession of progressive

'revelations,' i.e. *re-veilings*, the replacing of one *veil* by another a little less opaque, as we become capable of understanding, and profiting by a somewhat less obscured view of what is about us."

At the end of "The Honeymoon," after weighing well the long line of dogmas and philosophies, my hero comes to the conclusion, that "from the beginning of humanity there has been a progressive development of religion; that is to say, of the higher faculties which connect man with his Creator. This progress appears in the rise, decline, and fall of the different forms of religion that have appeared upon the earth." From this he concludes that all religions have been originally revealed by God, according to the capabilities of the intellectual advancement of the man to whom they were given, and that all of them are, in this light, true and holy, but progressional.

To this it may be objected that there can only be one truth, but my object was to prove that in all these different revelations there is but *one truth*, but that that truth can only be gradually perceived, as the human mind gradually expands. All the Bibles of antiquity teach the same fundamental doctrines, more or less hidden under the veil of allegory, and *these doctrines* I hold to be true, because I believe them revealed by God.



In the present volumes I have tried to put forth some of these doctrines which have existed ever since God's first revelation to mankind, in one form or another, viz.—The existence of a God, creator of the universe ; the immortality of the soul, and its eternal progress through the ages, which necessitates a succession of incarnations in material worlds ; and the plurality of these worlds which are inhabited by the said spirits.

It is to the second of these doctrines that I devote the present work, for it has always been, and ever will be, one of the fundamental and most important in the religions of mankind. It was common to the most uncivilised and to the most civilised nations of the earth ; it has been the object of fantastical superstition as well as that of philosophical speculation, and it is the property of both ancient and modern times.

It finds its origin in the idea which is innate in man, that the soul is immortal, and that it is of divine essence. But being of divine essence it must have been originally pure ; and hence the fall of man which we find holding such a prominent place in all the Bibles of antiquity.

According to the doctrine of the ancient Egyptians, the human race originated after the angels had revolted against the gods, and were therefore

tainted with guilt, a guilt which they must expiate ; to enable them to do this, the gods created earthly bodies, which these fallen spirits were sentenced to animate, so that by expiations they might regain their state of original purity. And these fallen spirits incarnated in these earthly bodies are the human race ; and human life—that is to say the connection of body and soul—is merely intended as a means of purifying the soul which had rebelled against its divine nature. All the precepts regulating their course of life were laid down by the Egyptians for this end ; and the judgment passed after death in the palace of Osiris they believed decided whether it had been attained or not. If it had not, the soul must return to the earth, again to renew its expiations ; and, according to the nature and measure of the guilt which it had contracted during its previous career, it must form a new union with a human body ; but if the soul was declared pure by the judge of the dead, it gradually ascended through the various regions of heaven to the highest abodes of the gods and pure spirits, where it would have gone by a much more direct road if it had not revolted and fallen.

This same belief we find in every religion of



antiquity, in the Vedas of Southern India as in the Eddas of Northern Europe, there is always the same doctrine of the immortal soul, which, having been created pure and subsequently fallen, must, through a successive course of earthly existences, regain its lost purity and attain perfection.

Thus, in the Rig-Veda, the oldest of the so-called “sacred writings” of the planet, and which were supposed to have been inspired by God himself, we read, —“*whilst yet enveloped in his mother's womb (a spirit) is subject to many births, and has entered upon evil.*”—(Professor Wilson's Translation, vol. ii., p. 137).

In the Bhagavat-Gita, we read of Crishna telling the Prince Arjuna, “*As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the soul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth others which are new.*” “*I have had many births, and thou also, Arjuna. I know them all, but thou, Hero ! knowest them not.*”

The necessity for these repeated returns to the material life, is thus explained in the same book : —“*The recompense acquired by good or evil deeds is like the waves of the sea, whose working none can hinder ; it is like a cord which binds them to their author, and which none can break. . . . For the education of our preceding life influ-*

ences us in the life that follows. . . . If a man have done the works that lead to the world of the moon, he goes to the world of the moon. . . . If a man has done the works that lead to the world of the sun, he goes to the world of the sun ; if a man has done the works that lead to the world of the Creator, he goes to the world of the Creator. Thus the soul goes to the world to which its works belong. What, then, is the use of giving oneself up to the gratification of sensual desires ? Abandon yourself to the satisfactions of sense, and all you will have got from this indulgence will be to have forged for yourself, at death, the chains that will link you to other bodies, and to other worlds. . . . The soul, on returning to the earth, profits by its previous acquirements : and thus through a long succession of gradual advances . . . and only after many births . . . the soul that has become pure and wise, is at last enfranchised from the necessity of coming back to this earth, and goes to the *Pure*," in other words, passes into a world of a higher degree than ours. " When these great souls have attained to perfection," we read further on, " they return no more to this perishable life of earth, and sojourn of sorrows. . . . The love of virtue is the supreme path, those who have

*attained to that elevation undergo no more births, but take on luminous bodies."*

In the laws of Manu, especially in the twelfth book, we have also a lengthy account of this doctrine of regeneration, or transmigration, as it has been badly called, and there is no doubt that the Buddhistic belief in the immortality of the soul, being derived from that of the Brahmanic Hindus, is based also on this doctrine. "*Make thyself an island, work hard, be wise,*" we read in Buddha's Dhammapada, or Path of Virtue. "*When thy infirmities are blown away, and thou art free from guilt, thou wilt not enter again into birth and decay. Let a wise man blow off the infirmities of his soul, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver, one by one, little by little, and from time to time.*"

The Buddhists also believe that all souls have begun pure, and like the Brahmins they also believe in the unreality and sinfulness of the world, in the necessity of the soul's freeing itself from the bondage of this world, and in the causal connection between the actions of man in this, and his condition in a subsequent, life. They, too, hold therefore that sin is the cause of reincarnation, and that by a total expiation of sin, the soul ceases to be reborn, and attains its final



resting place. Hence Sakya Muni's famous hymn :—

“ Through many various, oft repeated births,  
I've run my course ; still seeking, but in vain,  
The Builder of the house framed by desire.  
Painful and wearying are repeated births.  
But now, House Builder ! I have found thee at last,  
No house, henceforward, can'st thou build for me ;  
For having quenched the flames of low desire,  
Rafters and ridge-pole I have broken down,  
My soul from earthly lives has gained release,  
And entered blest Nirvana's glorious peace.”

I will not quote the numerous passages from the ancient Bibles which prove the antiquity of this doctrine, but merely enumerate a few of the most prominent nations and men of antiquity who believed in it, and based their religion upon it.

The old Mexicans may be cited as one instance, for their religion, strange to say, was very similar to that of the Egyptians, a similitude which is a strong proof, to my mind, of its divine origin.

The Persians and Chaldeans are another, for Zoroaster—the great religious teacher of the former—was a believer in the same doctrines.

The Chinese are another, the three greatest philosophers of which nation, Confucius, Lao-tze,

and Mencius, based their systems on the same great fundamental truths, which, indeed, seem common to all Eastern sages.

In Greece, the doctrine of reincarnation, or as it was then called, *metempsychosis*, was very popular amongst the great philosophers, such as Thales, who is said to have been the first to propound it, Aristotle, Pherécides, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, &c., &c. ; indeed the whole teaching of Plato, like that of his illustrious master, is undoubtedly based on the double idea of the immortality of the soul, and of the happiness or unhappiness of its successive existences according to its good or evil deeds.

In Greece, however, this doctrine never became the general belief of the people, but was confined to the teachings of the Mysteries, most of which, as the Hermetic, Orphic, Eleusinian, &c., taught substantially the same great doctrine. Delormel in his important work on the Ancient Mysteries, thus expresses himself:—"From the earliest times the initiated have known the unity, infinity, and perfection of God ; the infinity of inhabited worlds ; and our successive lives in them ;" and, in arguing in support of the latter point, he says, "As it is absurd to suppose that blessings and sorrows are the result of chance, we must believe

them to be a consequence of our right-doing or wrong-doing in previous lives."

Amongst the Jews this doctrine — *Gilgul Neshamoth* — was also taught in the Mysteries or secret Kabbala. "*All the souls,*" says the Sohar, its great code, "*are subject to the trials of transmigration; and men do not know which are the ways of the Most High in their regard. They do not know how they are judged in all times, as well before they come to this world as after they leave it. They do not know how many transformations and mysterious trials they must undergo; how many souls and spirits come back to this world without returning to the palace of the divine king.*"

In the time of Jesus, however, this doctrine was becoming more generally known, and from the account given of the Pharisees by Josephus, it would seem that their doctrine of the immortality of the soul was the same as that taught in the Sohar.

In Horne's introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures we read, "It appears that their notion of the immortality of the soul was the Pythagorean metempsychosis; namely, that the soul, after the dissolution of one body winged its flight into another; and that these removals were



perpetuated and diversified through an infinite succession, the soul animating a sound and healthy body, or being confined in a deformed and diseased frame, according to its conduct in a prior state of existence. From the Pharisees, whose tenets and traditions were generally received by the people, it is evident that the disciples of our Lord had adopted this philosophic doctrine of the transmigration of souls ; when, having met a man who had been *born* blind, they asked Jesus whether it were the sins of this man in a pre-existent state, which had caused the sovereign disposer to inflict upon him this punishment. To this inquiry, Christ replied that neither his vices nor sins in a pre-existent state, nor those of his parents were the cause of this calamity (*in this particular instance*).” (John ix. 1-4).

“ From this prevalent notion derived from the Greek philosophy, we find that during our Saviour’s public ministry, the Jews speculated variously concerning him, and indulged in several conjectures as to which of the ancient prophets it was whose soul now animated him, and performed such astonishing miracles. Some contended that it was the soul of Elias ; others of Jeremiah ; while others, less sanguine, only declared in

general terms that it must be the soul of one of the old prophets by which these mighty deeds were now wrought." (Matt. xvi. 14; Luke, ix. 19.)

Herod also believed in this doctrine, when he said, speaking of Jesus, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." (Matt. xiv. 2; Luke, ix. 7.)

The author of the Book of Wisdom (viii. 20) seems to allude to the same doctrine when he tells us, that *being good, he came into a body undefiled.*

And surely Jesus himself believed in it when he told Nicodemus, "*Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.*" (St John iii. 3.)

Besides, does he not tell us plainly in several places, speaking of John the Baptist, "*If ye will receive it, this is Elias who was to come;*" but, at the same time, he distinctly tells us that not all are yet able to receive this great truth, but only those who have grown up to its comprehension, "*He that hath ears to hear let him hear?*"

Amongst the early Christians, this was also a most popular doctrine. St Jerome positively

asserts that "the transmigration of souls is a doctrine which has been secretly taught from ancient times, as an esoteric and traditional truth, which ought to be confided only to the selected few;" and therefore warns those who possess not to divulge it.

Origen says of it, that it affords the only possible explanation of certain Biblical narratives, as the fighting of Jacob and Esau before their birth, and the declaration that God had already loved the one and hated the other; or the selection of Jeremiah when he was not yet born, after the statement said to have been made by God concerning him,—"*I knew thee before thou wert formed in the womb,*" or the strange fact that Ruth (who was said to have the soul of Thamar) could not bear children until God had imparted to her the spark of a female soul, and many other events which he argues "*would throw discredit on divine justice, unless they were justified by good or bad acts done in a former life.*"

Origen further asserts that the differences of human conditions which we see around us are caused by differences in the previous lives of the souls thus incarnated; that souls have sinned in wandering from the Creator; that they occupy different stations according to the degree of their



culpability; that they go to higher or lower worlds according to the weight of the corporeal chains they have forged for themselves by their wrong-doing; and that this earth is one of the primitive and purgatorial worlds.

We also read of St Augustine exclaiming,—  
“*Did I not, perhaps before I entered my mother’s womb, live elsewhere in another body?*” Lactantius, Arius, Mani, and Gregory of Nyanzen also professed the doctrine of the re-incarnation.

In latter years the Church has neglected it or not taken it into consideration, although some Catholic priests believe in it to this day, having come to the conclusion that, since baptism is declared to be necessary to salvation, providential justice must necessarily send back into this world the souls of infants who die without having received baptism, in order to give them a new body in which to receive that sacrament.

Many modern philosophers have based their views of the progress of mankind on the same doctrine, amongst whom may be mentioned Dupont de Nemours, Delormel, Lavater, Fontanelle, Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Saint Martin, Fichte, Schlegel, Ballanche, Van Helmont, Cardano, Postel, Bonnet, De Bretonne, Charles Fourier, Jean Reynaud, De Montal,

Jouffroy, Savy, Chateaubriand, De Codre, De Balzac, Lange, Cavour, Massimo d' Azeglio, Sir Humphrey Davy, Charles Young, Hoeffle, Flammarion, Puel, George Sand, Sardou Pezzani, Pelletan, Louis Figuier, Allan Kardec, &c., &c.

Of these I shall only quote one, the celebrated German critic and philosopher, G. E. Lessing, who endeavoured to establish it on metaphysical grounds. His arguments are briefly these,—The soul is a simple being, capable of infinite conceptions, but, being a finite being, it is not capable of such infinite conceptions at one and the same time ; it must obtain them gradually in an infinite succession of time. If, however, it obtain them gradually, there must be an order in which, and a degree to which these conceptions are acquired. This order and this measure are the senses. At present the soul has of such senses five, but neither is there any ground to assume that it has commenced with having five senses, nor that it will stop there. For since nature never takes a leap, the soul must have gone through all the lower stages before it arrives at that which it occupies now. From this he goes on further to say that since nature contains many substances and powers which are not accessible to those senses with which it is now endued, it must be assumed

that there will be future stages, at which the soul will have as many senses as correspond with the powers of nature. "And what if it were as good as proved," he says in his 'Education of the Human Race,' "that the vast slow wheel which is bringing mankind nearer and nearer to its future perfection, is only put in motion by smaller, swifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit to the sum of that great movement? . . . And so it is! The very same way by which the Human Race is travelling on to its perfection, must every individual of that race—one sooner, another later—have travelled over. *Have travelled over in one and the same lifetime?* Can he have been, in one and the self-same life, a sensual Jew and a spiritual Christian? Can he, in the self-same life, have overtaken both? . . . Surely not that! But why may not every individual man have existed more than once upon the earth? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? Because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had perverted and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? Why may not *I* have already performed these steps of my education which the prospect of merely temporal penalties and rewards can bring man to? And why may I not also



have performed all those other steps which the prospect of eternal rewards has so powerfully assisted us to accomplish? And why should I not come back again as often as I am able to acquire fresh knowledge, fresh expertness, from the experiences of this world? Do I take away so much from one life that there is nothing to repay me for the trouble of coming back? Is this a reason against it? Or because I forget that I have been here already? *Happy is it for me that I do forget!* The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And even that which I forget *now*, is it necessarily forgotten for ever? Or is it a reason against this hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? Lost? Time lost? And how much, then, should I miss? *Is not a whole eternity mine?"*

"And this my system," he adds in his little, but important essay, DASS MEHR ALS FÜNF SINNE DEN MENSCHEN SEIN KÖNNEN—in a fragmentary note discovered after his death—"this my system is certainly the oldest of all philosophical systems; for it is in reality no other than the system of the pre-existence of the soul and metempsychosis, which did not only occupy the speculations of Pythagoras and Plato, but also

before them of Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians—in short, of all the sages of the East ; and this circumstance alone ought to work a good prejudice in its favour ; for the first and oldest opinion is, in matters of speculation, always the most probable, because common sense immediately hit upon it.”

I have quoted at some length the reasonings of this eminent philosopher, because I believe they will serve as the fittest introduction to the subject of this book, as they present the doctrine on which it is based in its four principal points or aspects.

*First.* That the education of each and every individual must be accomplished as that of the whole human race, by gentle but progressive stages, for which a plurality of earthly existences become necessary.

*Secondly.* The just and wise reasons why we should forget during our present life those already undergone by our spirit.

*Thirdly.* The great superiority of this doctrine over all others, for it affords us the only possible demonstration of the justice of God and of the brotherhood of the human race, and the only plausible explanation of the difficulties, sorrows, and inequalities of this life which every other doctrine has as yet failed to explain.

And *Fourthly*. The antiquity and universality of this doctrine, which is one of the greatest proofs of its truth, for (to recur to the philosopher's own words) "the first and the oldest opinion is, in matters of speculation, always the most probable, because common sense immediately hit upon it."

Thus, you see that the doctrine with which I have tried to solve the great problems of existence—What am I? How am I? Where do I come from? and Whither am I going?—would seem at once to be the most probable, and philosophical, as it is the oldest, a doctrine which would appear to have been both revealed by God and arrived at by the speculations of man, and is certainly a doctrine which has occupied the minds of the greatest philosophers and divines since the creation of the world.

In writing the following pages, my idea has been to give in the form of a romance the substance of this theory, which to so many minds is the only one that can explain the mysteries of life and reconcile science with religion.

It may be deemed unwise to attempt to give to the world, in the shape of a novel, that which is, in fact, a religious and psychological dissertation; but, having come to the conclusion that



most people will read in the form of a romance things which in another form they would never dream of reading, I have thought it better to adopt this method and brave the criticisms of reviewers who only deal with romances as with amusing tales of pure fiction—*pour passer le temps*.

In the first part of "Through the Ages" I have attempted to portray the unsatisfactory hollowness of the world to a man of a certain degree of enlightenment; its unfitness to offer consolation for the death of a dear relative, and that when we do not find consolation and peace of mind in ourselves it is useless to seek for it elsewhere. Here is a man favoured by fortune in every way, rich, and envied by all, in good health, and surrounded by everything that could make life agreeable, and yet whose heart is heavy; and who in the hours of the greatest enjoyment sighs for something beyond, higher and surer than anything the world can give; and is overpowered by the sense of the mysteries of life which surround him at every step.

In the second part the scene changes, the veil is lifted, and the peace which passes all understanding penetrates into his heart; he learns that love is stronger than death; and that what we

call by that name is only the transition between one state of existence and another ; that the body we occupy one day and quit the next, has in reality but little to do with our *being*. For the inadmissible doctrine of the resurrection *of* the flesh he has learnt to substitute the grand doctrine of transmigration of souls, and the resurrection *in* the flesh.

And, dear reader, do not imagine that I am drawing on my imagination when I describe the spirit form of a departed soul visiting once more the earth, and becoming so materialised as to be distinctly recognised by him who knew and loved her during her short earthly life ; for I have myself witnessed such apparitions, and so have many others ; men and women whose character and position is too well established for anyone to dream of lightly pronouncing them to be devoid of reason for so believing and stating ; besides, this is only what the Bible teaches us as having often taken place in olden times, when the appearance of angels amongst men was too common an occurrence to excite doubt, or even surprise.

In the second part I have tried to narrate the history of two spirits who begin their career almost at the same time, and go on pro-

gressing, by means of a succession of earthly existences *through the ages*, and hence the title of the book. In them I have attempted to shew the gradual formation of character as it is more or less developed in one way or another by the circumstances in which they are placed, and by the discipline and the trials they respectively undergo. I have endeavoured to present these two characters with all the inconsistencies and self-contradictions peculiar to untrained and uncultivated human nature—with the intricate mixture of good and evil qualities, of greatness and meanness, of wisdom and folly, which belong only to the human race; and from which the animals are exempted; and to show how, by means of this very inconsistency of character, they were able to progress in goodness and knowledge, and were gradually drawn towards one another until their primitive repulsion was developed into a kinder feeling, and at last grew into a mutual love and devotion which braved even death.

In one of their earthly lives, which takes place in Judea about one thousand eight hundred years ago, and the events of which I have taken principally from those recorded by the Evangelists, I



introduce, with all reverence, the Saviour of mankind : am I justified in so doing ?

Can the sacred records of Christianity be used as the basis of a fictitious tale ?

These were the questions which I naturally put to myself whilst writing the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Nights. And I have since arrived at the conclusion that I was perfectly justified in so doing, having come across Klopstock's famous "Messiah," a poem which describes the principal events attending the passion and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has always been considered most orthodox. Besides, the same thing, although in a very different spirit, was done by the immortal Spanish dramatist, Calderon, in his "Autos Sacramentales," a collection of seventy-two religious dramas which were published in six volumes, in the year 1717, with the sanction of the Catholic Church, and have often been performed. Since then, a curious novel, in which Jesus is the hero, has also appeared in Spain, with the full consent and approbation of the Church ; to say nothing of the yearly sacred plays which, like the "Mysteries of the middle ages," are descriptive of the birth of our Lord, or of his passion and death, according to the seasons of the year, and which are performed to this day

in the theatres of Madrid and the provinces. I have therefore come to the conclusion that such a step, far from being irreverent, is one most orthodox and wise; for the conditions of a good novel should be those which have for their object the inculcation of religion, morality and virtue; by means of an interesting tale of love and woe; in which vice and crime should be made to strive and combat with virtue and holiness and finally end by being overcome and converted by them.

And where will the novelist find such an inexhaustible store of moral virtue and interest as in the Scriptures? Why should not the character of our Lord be held up to admiration as frequently as possible, when he is precisely the great model offered to us for imitation?

It is in Sacred History that we should seek for inspiration, and for fit examples of the triumph of virtue over sin. It was the Bible which inspired such great works as Tasso's "*Gerusalemme Liberata*," Milton's "*Paradise Lost*" and "*Paradise Regained*," Chateaubriand's "*Martyrs*," and Cardinal Wiseman's "*Fabiola*," works which are written in the pure and holy spirit of true faith, and which fill the reader with holy and saint-like aspirations.

And now I shall conclude this long preface

by saying of this book, as Lord Lytton says, of "ZANONI," a work very much after the same kind ; "it is a romance, and it is not a romance. It is a truth for those who can comprehend it, and an extravagance for those who cannot."





# THROUGH THE AGES.



Part the First.





## Part the First.

### I.

“Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,  
A shadow on those features fair and thin;  
And softly, from that hush'd and darken'd room,  
*Two angels issued where but one went in.*”

LONGFELLOW.

It was towards the middle of June, a fine starry night, and the moon shone brightly over our old ancestral home.

It had been an oppressive, anxious, and busy day for me, for every moment I expected a joy which I fondly endeavoured to realise, or feared a misfortune, of which I hardly dared to think.

Nearly two years had elapsed since my marriage with Conchita Vargas, the lovely Spanish bride who had made my home so supremely happy, and whom I still fondly loved, as when we wandered side by side on the banks of Loch Lomond, during the happy bridal tour I have endeavoured to record in the pages of “The Honeymoon.”

How long this happiness was to last, was a thought I shrank from dwelling upon, for every movement of the clock brought us nearer to the dreaded hour that was to realize the dreams we had indulged in together for the last two years. Blessed, infinitely blessed as I already was, the Almighty Father of souls was about to bestow upon me a new and fruitful joy. In a few hours, perhaps in a few moments, I was to become a father. Yes, a father! But who can understand to its full extent the rapturous joy contained in that word? Ah! only *he*, the supremely blessed one, who has pressed against his heart the youthful and beloved bride of his choice with her first-born in her arms.

The night had been fine and clear, although now, within the last hour, some dark, heavy clouds had gathered over my head, threatening every moment to burst into a storm of rain and thunder. Yet it might pass off, for there was a high wind, and here and there large open spaces of blue sky showed still the bright, brilliant firmament sparkling with the myriad worlds of the universe.

And the moon, the ever-welcome companion of lovers, she too illumined the heavens above me, as ever and anon she appeared as if sailing along through the black thunder clouds which veiled her brightness, casting her pure white light over tree and tower, bringing the whole

Gothic pile into view at every moment, only to be blotted out by the dark clouds that would shadow it as with a funeral pall the next.

I had lingered long that night smoking my Havannah, on the stately marble terrace that encircled two sides of the old building. I burnt with the anxious yet dreaded desire of regaining the house, and entering once more the tapestried chamber in which I had passed the whole day, and in which lay all my love and all my hopes; but I trembled at the thought, that perhaps she, on whom all my future happiness or misery depended, might already have been called to quit the old tower, for a far more beautiful and enduring mansion from which she could not return, and to which I could not follow her. This fear haunted me. I could think of nothing else; I tried over and over again to drive the maddening idea from my oppressed brain; but no, it would return, and each time more horribly distinct than before. A thought came over me. "Could this be a presentiment?" and my heart sank within me at the idea. "But no, it cannot be!" I exclaimed; "the doctor told me only half-an-hour ago that she was going on as well as we could hope, under the alarming crisis which was causing us so much anxiety. It cannot be. . . . God cannot take her away from me . . . now, when I have begun so well to understand her pure and fervent spirit; now, when our souls are



made as one by our long companionship; our mutual confidences; and our sympathy in all high and holy things—now, when she is going to become a mother—and yet!”

I sank down overcome upon one of the stone seats of the terrace, and I felt myself shiver and turn cold, even as the very marble upon which I leaned.

At this moment I felt, for I could not have heard it on account of the distance that separated me from her, I felt a low cry, a cry that filled my whole being with terror, a cry that, thrilling through me, made me feel all the agonies of death, and yet a cry so soft that it might easily have been mistaken for the murmur of the distant fountains that fell softly upon the grass, behind the ivy-covered turrets of Carlton Hall.

I rose with a shudder, as if an electric shock had run through my whole frame, and I hastened towards the house with a beating heart and an unsteady step. As I mounted the stone staircase that led to our apartments, I was met by the doctor.

“Is it all over?” I cried to him, out of breath.

He said nothing, but there he stood before the old door, as if barring the way that I should not pass; the moon shone upon him with all her ghastly brilliancy; his dark dress was in disorder,

and his face was careworn and anxious, and as pale as death.

He said nothing, but I understood it all too well . . . . Ah! I shrieked her beloved name, "Conchita!" And I felt as if struck by lightning at his feet.

## II.

“ Hojas del arbol caidas  
Juguetes del viento son,  
Las ilusiones perdidas,  
Ay ! son hojas desprendidas,  
Del arbol del corazon.”

ESPRONCEDA.

SHE was gone. My love, my darling, my treasure, my all !

For some days I could not realize it, my brain refused to retain the fatal truth ; for days, for weeks, I was insensible to it ; sometimes I raved like a madman, and had to be held and fastened down to my bed, for they feared I might destroy myself ; sometimes I would wander for hours through the gardens and woods I had so often visited with her, or sit by the tranquil lake side moaning, until my burning brain would lose all consciousness of the surrounding scene, and they would come out and seek me, to find me at last, after hours of useless search, lying senseless on the damp ground.

The babe had been saved, but what was he to me, now that *she* was no more ! I felt almost a loathing to him ; in my mad folly I accused him



of his mother's early death. I could not bear to see the tiny face that so reminded me of my lost darling ; those dark, clear eyes, which seemed to penetrate the profoundest abyss of my soul, were too much like hers, too much like those sweet almond-shaped Spanish eyes of my Conchita ; eyes that had once been my pride and glory. His hair was also glossy and soft like hers, and of the same golden hue. The resemblance was too great, and I dreaded to look at him. I dreaded to meet his baby gaze. I dreaded his angelic smile, that reminded me of my utter loneliness ; for had not the angels taken her to their home ?

My heart was all with her, and I had no sympathy left for her child.

I left him at Carlton Hall, and by the advice of the doctors I determined to make a voyage to America, hoping that travelling might give another current to my thoughts, and help to dissipate the settled gloom that eventually seemed to take possession of me, and which threatened to undermine my reason and to unsettle my mind.

This complete change of life, and scene, had become now absolutely necessary for me ; I was therefore obliged to confide my poor motherless babe to the care of Mrs Glenn, my dear old nurse, who, since my youth, had filled the situation of housekeeper at Carlton Hall.

I knew I could depend on her maternal care, and on the deep attachment that bound her personally to me, as well as to the family; two of her daughters also lived on the property, having married men who had been employed on the place for years.

My mind was therefore at ease, as far as the child was concerned. I felt assured on that point; as I stood on the broad deck of the noble steamer, as she majestically floated down the Mersey bearing me to a new world, and as I looked back on the land I was leaving, and which only seemed to contain for me a grave!

I knew that my child would at least want for nothing in my absence, except indeed the sweet mother, whom it had pleased God to call nearer to His throne of glory.

We had continual head winds, and therefore a rough and slow passage across the Atlantic. I passed whole days and nights on deck alone, leaning over the stern of the vessel contemplating the ever-changing waves of the restless sea.

I never could have imagined anything so solemn, so grand, and so glorious; and yet it seemed to have no effect upon me whatever, unless it were to increase my gloom.

We were nearly two weeks at sea. Two weeks—that seemed as centuries for my anxious fellow-passengers, who for the most part were probably expecting to meet their families and friends at the

end of the voyage—but to me, left alone in the world, in the wide, wide world, they passed like a dream. I could keep no account of days, nor think of anything but my lost happiness, and the one who absorbed every thought of my soul.

Since the day we left Liverpool, the infuriated waves had dashed continually with all their violence against our frail and fragile ship. One plank alone separated us from the profound abyss of the everlasting deep. “Oh! if that plank would only fail!” I thought at the time, “I should then join my lost love again, never to part from her more.”

One cannot help shuddering at the thought of the immensity of the ocean that is spread around us on all sides.—Water, water—nothing but water; and above our heads the still broader firmament, sparkling with its myriads of worlds, each of which contains oceans as large, or larger than the one upon which we are now floating.

The spectacle which the sea offers during the tranquil hours of the long night, is perhaps still more beautiful and touching, than when illumined by the garish light of day, and is certainly not less sublime, for then all human voices are hushed in sleep, all is silent as the grave on board, and the wide ocean’s deep, mellow, and murmuring voice alone is heard, filling the heart with dread; and yet with great thoughts too—for it is full of deep, mysterious meaning to the soul brought



face to face with it alone in the silence of the night.

Who has not felt awe when he has contemplated alone the immensity of the deep, chanting its eternal requiem over the dead it holds in its bosom, or lulling them by its mournful voice to unbroken slumbers in the caverns of its vast desert! Who that has thus stood by himself contemplating such a scene, and filled with such sad thoughts as mine then were, but has not yearned to feel the warm pressure of some dear and tender hand in his, that would have assured him of human sympathy and human love!

And yet nowhere does one feel more the presence of the Creator than in the midst of the lonely ocean, where there is no other hand to save. For the sea is but a vast cemetery, and the thousands that slumber in its depths seem to praise the Lord with the mighty voice of its ever-rolling waves.

But the sea is not inhabited only by the corpses of the dead; thousands of living beings breathe in it who also praise the Lord in their way, and afford ample proof of His wisdom and of His power. The deep has its monsters as well as the earth, and it contains the largest as well as the smallest specimens of the animal creation, from the wondrous cetaceous tribe, to the invisible infusoria, from the colossal whale of the south sea, to the diminutive insect imperceptible to the



human eye. It has its butterflies as well as the air. Fire-flies flit through its billows, and, like their terrestrial representatives, dance and gleam amidst the foliage of a tropical forest. Little living lamps are hung amongst the waves, and pour out their silvery radiance from vital urns, which are replenished as fast as exhausted. The transparency of some of these inhabitants of the deep gives them an appearance of fairy workmanship, which is perfectly enchanting. It can hardly be said I exaggerate, if I state that some of them resemble little globes of the purest ice.

Ah! indeed there is something fascinating in the sea and its crystalline inhabitants. Hours and hours have I passed, leaning over the side of the vessel, watching the phosphorescent lights that surround it at night, and often have I found consolation in those vague and ghastly apparitions that not all the sympathy of my friends could obtain for me with their stereotyped consolations. Alone in the midst of the waves one feels surrounded by invisible voices, that pour into one's heart the comfort which human lips in vain try to bestow upon their fellow creatures.

To encounter a ship in the middle of the Atlantic is an occurrence common enough, and yet one that brings each time a new sense of joy to our hearts. The steamship is the emblem of our modern civilisation, and to discover one on the horizon makes one feel that even upon this

liquid desert, man has succeeded in extending his dominion by the aid of civilisation and science. I have often contemplated those apparitions, for such did they seem to me, and each time they have suggested a new train of ideas, particularly at night when all is mystery and obscurity.

A light in the distance is first seen, dim and uncertain, it grows larger and larger every minute, then we perceive a dark body surmounted by some white sails ; nearer it approaches. The sailors recognise each other as fellow beings, and pass a signal of greeting, two rockets fly into the air, disturbing, for one moment, the tranquil darkness of the night. A moment afterwards this passing vision has completely vanished. Whither has it gone ? No one knows. Most likely we shall never see those fellow men again, and yet we are exposed to the same dangers, we are on the borders of the same unfathomable abyss. Perhaps in half-an-hour we may sleep with them in one common grave. The same waves may roll over us, and over them, the same storm may beat over our remains and add new corpses to the common grave. And so we pass them as if they were not total strangers to us. Strangers ! Are there two men upon this earth who can be said to be strangers to each other ?

At last, after fourteen days of sea, we arrived in sight of Long Island, to the great joy of my

companions. The Pilot came on board with the newspapers, which were soon seized upon and devoured by my anxious fellow-passengers. To me they could tell nothing that I cared to hear. They could announce no good tidings of home or friends, and they could bring no bad news to make my heart feel heavier than it did.

That afternoon we entered the harbour and anchored off Jersey City. The steamer was soon over-run by the numerous friends and relations of our passengers. Every one had somebody belonging to him who came on board to bid him welcome to the new world. Amidst this scene of general joy, I alone was sad and lonely, I felt even more lonely than I did on the midst of the ocean the day before.

The passengers are all visibly agitated at the sight of the crowd that invades the pier, and even the deck of the steamer. They all try to recognise amongst them some friend, or some relation. In one corner, and standing upon some ropes, there is a man seeking his wife with his anxious eyes; a little farther, a young woman standing upon the very verge of the vessel is waving her handkerchief, while a little behind her another, perhaps a sister, has taken off her hat which she holds in the air as a token of recognition to a young man, who, with his eyes fixed upon her, stands on the pier below. Upon one of the wheels a little fat man with a red nose



seeks in every direction, with his opera glass, some person who does not seem to be forthcoming, or who does not see him in his elevated position. At my very side, two young ladies, with blue eyes and golden hair, fall into each others arms; while upon the plank thrown across the water, that yet separates us from the land, a young sailor stands, holding in his arms his sweetheart, they both blush and look half ashamed of themselves, but it would be impossible to paint the joy and the unconcealed happiness their faces expressed as they went down on to the pier to make room for the stout lady and her white-haired husband, who were landing just then.

I turned my head not to see all this joy that made my heart feel only the more sad, every one had some one belonging to him, some one who loved him, some one to love and to cherish; I had no one,—father, mother, brothers, wife, all had gone, and now I was alone! alone! . . . With an uncertain step, and a sad look, I quitted the good old ship that had borne me safely across the broad Atlantic, and I stepped upon the American soil as I might have stepped upon a grave.



### III.

“I suoi pensieri in lui dormir non puono.”

TASSO, *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

I REMAINED six months in the United States, during which time I visited all the principal cities of this immense country. New York with all its busy life and noise, Washington with its grand public buildings, Baltimore with its lovely daughters, Boston with its literary and scientific institutions, and Philadelphia with its charming society ; but nowhere did I succeed in finding that balm and consolation which was the aim and object of my travels. I hunted the wild buffalo in the prairies, and I navigated the dangerous rapids of the rivers from their very source, but nothing succeeded in mitigating my sorrow, much less in effacing from my mind the constant bitter regret for the great loss I had so recently experienced, and at last I came to the conclusion that when one does not find consolation and peace of mind in oneself, it is useless to seek for it in outward distractions.

But my travels were not quite wasted upon me. I have always been very fond of travelling, and

particularly of travelling in America, where it is impossible not to derive some good and useful knowledge from all one sees.

In this immense continent the continuous and rapid advances of civilisation are perhaps more visible than anywhere else.

Half a century has hardly elapsed since the days when steam and electricity were almost unknown; to-day the entire surface of this vast country is traversed in every direction by railway lines, and even through the still savage prairies of the far west does the steam-engine work its way to the golden gates of California.

The lakes and rivers that twenty years ago were unknown to us, are to-day navigated to their very sources, by the palace-like steamers that carry civilisation and prosperity to the very heart of this comparatively virgin world.

Fifty years ago, months were necessary to transmit news to Europe, to hold, indeed, any sort of communication with the old world. To-day the electric telegrams cross the broad Atlantic with the rapidity of lightning, and our message is received in America *four hours before it left London!*

Could Columbus come back and look again upon this fair half of the world that he alone had the courage to discover and give to civilisation, would he ever be able to realise that it was the same land that his dreams, his endeavours, his

heart-broken aspirations and invincible perseverance, had at last wrested, as it were, from the broad bosom of the ocean; from the dreaded darkness of the unknown and invisible; and given as a free gift, a bright radiant jewel to shine in the crown of the noble-minded Spanish queen, the only sovereign of Europe who would listen with interest to his enthusiasm, or give credence to his arguments, and who so grandly gave her own personal jewels to procure him the means of undertaking his long, lonely, hazardous voyage across undiscovered seas; the result of which was to bestow on her country and on her descendants the sovereignty of a new world? Would either Columbus or his companions recognise in the luxurious, highly cultivated, utilitarian, bustling, go-ahead country, that has so far outstripped the progress of their own, the virgin America of the impenetrable forests they had given to the knowledge, and the benefit of Christendom? Who indeed would believe that this flourishing and nobly utilitarian country was but the baby child of poor old Spain?

Where the first early discoverers found virgin woods, are now spread wide fields and meadows, cultivated and cared for with all the appliances of modern improvement. The little huts and villages of the Indians have become rich cities; and the poor wigwams of the savages have been con-

verted into luxurious mansions, that can compare in every respect with the richest palaces of Europe.

Such are the effects of civilisation. In Europe, where all these changes have been brought about by slow and marked degrees, it is not so noticeable; but in America it is impossible not to marvel and wonder at the great victories obtained by the mind of man over wild nature.

“Can this progress go on for ever?” is the question one often asks oneself at seeing at every instant new proofs of its wonders. “Civilisation once commenced, will it ever stop?” No; whilst man inhabits this planet, it will, it must go on progressing; there is that in the human mind that conducts it towards perfection, something that prevents it from ever standing still. Can it be possible that our soul, made after God’s image, aspires towards its Creator—towards perfection? Or is it perchance that His divinity attracts all and everything created, towards its Creator, the source of infinity? But can this progress ever reach a climax? Shall we ever arrive at the top of the ladder, and be all made perfect? No, this cannot be, for we are so constructed, that if to-day we could be all alike, to-morrow there would already be some wiser, and better, and further advanced than the rest, and the standard of perfection is ever before us!

Besides, the wisdom and goodness of God are infinite like Himself, and the wiser and better we



become the farther we appear from possessing either. The nearer we approach to His eternal glory the more we are able to understand the little we know, and the immensity of what lies before us. Progress, therefore, can know no limits; if it had any, surely we would have reached them long ago.

But the sun will always gild the tops of the mountain before it shines upon the plain; therefore the few in every country must govern both morally and physically the many. The Constitution of the United States has made all its subjects alike, but are there in the whole continent of America two men exactly alike? For my part I know no country where there exists such inequality between men, as in the United States.

The Americans are accused of having neglected their moral education in their anxiety to develope their material progress to its full extent. This comes from the fact that the United States have no national religion. All religions are here considered alike; the government of the country has nothing whatever to do with them, and lets them fight their own battles as well as they can. So the result is, that religion is quite a matter of fashion or feeling in the States, the most fashionable church is the best supported, and when it ceases to be so, then it is done away with altogether. There exists in Broadway a large handsome church, that when it went out of fashion was changed into a theatre! Theatre or church,

all seems to be the same now-a-days. But I really cannot say that I like to see the house of God changed into a play-house.

But is this the fault of the people? Is it not rather the fault of the churches themselves and of the religions they teach? I must say that as for morals and real religious feeling, the Americans are far in advance of us. They may not care so much for their churches, but they evidently do not shut their eyes to avoid seeing the darkness of the past, but open them to look to the light of the present.

“Whatever may have been the faults of the ancient governments,” says B. Disraeli, speaking of forms of government, “they were in closer relation to the times, to the countries, and to the governed than ours. The ancients invented their governments according to their wants; the moderns have adopted foreign policies, and then modelled their conduct upon this borrowed regulation. This circumstance has occasioned our manners and our customs to be so confused, and absurd, and unphilosophical. What business had we, for instance, to adopt the Roman law—a law foreign to our manners, and consequently disadvantageous? He who profoundly meditates upon the situation of Modern Europe will also discover how productive of misery has been the senseless adoption of oriental customs by northern people.” Can this not be equally well applied and

with greater reason to our religious institutions? What business had we to bind the intellect and fetter the conscience, by adopting the garb of ancient Jewish faith, in spite of its being so much too narrow for us, and for our present knowledge of the universe? If anything has been productive of misery to Europe, I am sure this adoption of an old Hebrew philosophy by a modern and northern progressive people has been the greatest.

This is the reason why to-day we think much more of the form of adoration, and of maintaining our dogmas, than of religion itself. And I venture to say that not half the men that call themselves Christians know what that word really means.

When will the Christian churches be freed from the narrow-mindedness and false ideas that are at present undermining their very foundations? When will men get to understand that what God expects from us, is not that we should belong to this or that community, nor hold to this or that dogma, nor, indeed, to any special phase of belief, but that we should do unto others as we would have others do unto us? When shall we fully comprehend the words of Jesus, "Not those who call Lord! Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father that is in heaven?" And when, oh God! shall we realise that religion is the love that unites the creature with his Creator.

## IV.

“Thy mighty waste of waters rushing on,  
Yet inexhaustless, great Niagara,  
Monarch of floods, whose torrent of an hour  
Surpasses mighty rivers’ annual floods,  
And seems an emblem of eternity.”

N. WHYTE.

THE 9th of August, about eight o’clock in the morning, I left New York by the railway with the intention of visiting Niagara. Niagara! How many dreams and how many efforts of the imagination are there comprised in this word! Niagara, the wonder of the whole world, the most marvellous scene of this planet, was going to be developed before my eyes, and my heart beat at the idea, that at last this dream of my life would soon be turned into a remembrance.

The numerous railways of the United States form a no small phase of its civilisation. Everybody knows the superiority of their cars over our usual carriages, and this superiority demonstrated itself in full to me during my journey to Canada, that takes about twelve hours to perform.

The Company of the Erie Railway put one of



their splendid palace-cars at my disposal, free of charge, a carriage capable of holding forty-eight persons with the greatest comfort and ease.

And here let me thank the different companies of the American railways and their presidents, for their unbounded kindness to me during my tour in the United States, where I never was allowed to pay a railway fare, but had splendid saloon cars always put at my disposal whenever I wanted to go anywhere, and frequently sumptuous luncheons supplied by the courtesy of the directors.

The country through which the train passes on its way north is extremely picturesque and rich. It runs successively through the valleys of the Hudson, the Delaware, and the Susquehannah. It would be impossible to describe the beauties of these majestic rivers, the size and surroundings of New York Bay, the glories of the Palissades and highlands of the Hudson river, the romantic beauties of the Delaware and its grand canals, and the luxurious vegetation of the lovely and poetic Susquehannah, beautiful in every part, even as its Indian name.

We dined on the banks of this charming river, in the hotel known as the Hearrucca House, and then continued our journey on towards Buffalo, passing just below the lovely falls of the Genesee river, that pour down a mighty torrent of water from a height of no less than three hundred feet.

At half-past one in the morning we arrived at Niagara, a small station, and the last I believe in the United States. An omnibus conducted us to the hotel, a monster building, as all the great hotels are in this country.

From the railway I could hear the roar of the waters, and a large white misty cloud, rising to a prodigious height upon the dark blue sky, showed me the proximity of the great cataract.

At first I took this colossal column of evaporated water for a mere illusion, but no, it was a reality, although an astounding one, for I was as yet far away from the Falls themselves.

At that moment the full moon of August illumined this vaporous spray of the waters, that seemed to wish to invade the skies, not contented with the possession of the greater part of the planet.

It was already late in the afternoon, but I took a fly to drive over to the Falls.

We passed through the village, a small town entirely formed by hotels and shops, to-day the latter were all closed, for it happened to be Sunday, and the pious inhabitants directed their steps towards their respective churches, in order to worship God each in his own way ; but how much more truly was I going to worship the almighty Creator, by admiring His glorious work ! How much more soul-inspiring was my

awe-stricken admiration, than all their too often empty repetition of words !

We crossed the suspension bridge.

This stupendous structure measures eight hundred feet in length, and is hung, as if by a miracle, some three hundred feet in the air ; beneath it dash, with all their might, the en-furiated waves of the rapids, impelled along by the swift current, midst foam, and mist, and spray, forming in their headlong career the celebrated whirlpool a little way beyond the bridge.

This bridge is constructed entirely of iron, and weighs eight hundred tons, it is of two stories, one above for the trains, and another beneath for carriages and foot passengers.

Once in Canada, the road goes on by the side of the river for nearly two miles ; we continued this way, the rapids dashing against the sides of the rocks with more and more impetuosity, the nearer we approached the great cataract ; while the stone walls of this infernal whirlpool became higher and higher.

We ascend to about a height of some three hundred feet. In front of us, on the other side of the river, a snow-white torrent falls from the top of the high cliff ; it is called the Bridal veil, and is an artificial waterfall.

The carriage continues its onward way. It is a splendid day, the last rays of the setting sun

linger still upon the trees, upon the trees attired in those warm autumnal tints that have made the American-Indian summer, as it is called, so famous all over the world. The western sky is aglow with indescribable radiancy, and the murmuring waters below reflect each tint of the setting sun, thus making of the rapids a perfect river of molten fire.

Onward still we go. My heart beats with excitement. I tell the coachman to go still faster, every moment seems a century — after a few minutes a thick rain begins to pour down upon us—a perfect deluge—and yet the sky is as bright as ever; there before me is the departing Lord of day shining through the waters and making the most perfect rainbow of every colour with its last but still powerful rays.

This is not rain, the coachman says, as he gets down to close the carriage, which is an open one: it is the spray from the cataract. I cannot speak,—before me, at my right, at my left, there is nothing but water, water falling on every side.

The sound of this immense volume of ever-falling water, is louder than the loudest thunder I ever heard; and yet, I can hear every pulsation of my beating heart!

Suddenly the wind changes, the spray is driven in another direction, and the blinding shower ceases for a moment to envelope my carriage, the mist is dispersed—just in front of me



—just before my eyes—and close, quite close, closer than I could have imagined, I behold—  
NIAGARA. . . . Great God! who can describe the effect this glorious sight has on the heart of thy adoring creature!

. . . . .  
Since that never-to-be-forgotten moment, I have often seen Niagara. I have seen it from all points, and under all circumstances. Lighted up by the silvery moon, and red with the reflection of the setting sun. Surrounded by the thousand different colours of the autumnal foliage, and draped in its snowy vestments of mid-winter, when, perhaps, it presents the grandest and most wonderful spectacle of all; but it never impressed me so much as on my first visit, when I beheld, for the first time in my life, this, the most striking and sublime of earthly scenes.

But what can I say that will convey to my readers an idea of the marvellous reality? How many travellers have attempted to describe it, and yet, not one has as yet been able to create in the mind of his reader, a conception of what it really is.

The first impression that Niagara makes upon the traveller, is one of stupor; amazed, dazzled, one is obliged to shut one's eyes and cover one's ears; a new sensation takes possession of the astounded mind. The spray rising to a colossal height over the Falls, hides it entirely from our

gaze, for the first moment or two, and it is only through this mist, and after some time, that one can perceive the cataract, at least the top part of it, for the bottom is always lost in the white foam which the violent fall of this stupendous volume of water produces as it strikes the rocks below. The spray, carried by the wind, falls all around like a thick piercing rain.

When I again opened my eyes a reaction came over me, my first impressions were scarcely realised, and a feeling of disappointment crept over me. I had heard so much of Niagara, of its beauties and its colossal size, that I found, when at last I was able to judge for myself, that I had entertained in my mind a most exaggerated picture of it, my vivid imagination had quite outrivalled the greatest wonder of the earth, and for one moment I would have given anything not to have seen the reality.

I believe that this disappointment has been felt by almost all those who have visited the great waterfall.

But this feeling only lasted a short time, for the longer one looks at this perpetual fall of water, the more one is able to realise its grandeur, and is obliged to admire it; it seems to grow under our very eyes.

Niagara, I believe, means in the Indian language "thunder of waters," and well it deserves its name.

Between the two principal falls—that is to say, between the American and the Horse-Shoe Fall of Canada—there are a few picturesque and lovely islands which seem to have sprung of the foam caused by the waters. Nothing can equal their wild, glorious shores covered with luxuriant vegetation of the most vivid hues, from the bright red to the palest yellow, and constantly washed by the ever green water as it falls into the abyss below.

On this island I used often to stand and watch the rapids above the Falls, and the mysterious and impenetrable foam and spray below. There are bridges from island to island, bridges that the rush of the water would seem must break to atoms every instant, but they are however, safe enough. Upon one of these bridges I have passed hours leaning upon the rustic railing and gazing below upon the falling waters, over which there is always a rainbow trembling, as if it really were in the angry surge, and not merely a reflection.

“From side to side, beneath the glittering moon,  
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,  
Like hope upon a death-bed, and worn ;  
Its steely dyes, while all around is torn  
By the distracted waters, bears serene  
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn ;  
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,  
Love watching madness with unalterable mien.”

as I believe Byron's verses run. But the real time to stand upon those fairy-like islands and

watch the ever-falling waters and the eternally rising spray, is at night. When the tourist leaves them to seek his hotel bed at night, when the full moon of August shines like silver over the whole scene, blending every outline, and making the ever-glorious picture appear still more mysterious and sublime, under the bright and clear light of the harvest moon, Calypso herself would have been proud of this island.

The peculiar effect of moonlight upon the features of a landscape is to harmonise, to blend, to soften down, to spiritualise it, so to speak. Everything within its smile is lighter, more graceful, less material. The rivers are turned into vales of winding silver, the waterfall turns into a cascade of diamonds; the very cliffs lose their harshness of outline; the trees, in their picturesque repose, look like the trees of a dream; and even the thunder of the waters in sympathy with the scene falls upon the ear with musical cadence.

It is standing upon this very Luna island that I have witnessed the extraordinary phenomenon of the lunar rainbow, from which I believe the spot derives its name, and which I believe can only be seen here. If we think the rainbow we are so accustomed to see beautiful, how much more beautiful must we think this pale, transparent bow formed by the silvery reflection of the midnight moon?

. . . . .

I had a strong desire to go below the Falls, so I



hired a guide and a dress, and went down from the Canada side.

A large and interesting museum has been erected in front of the site of the late famous table rock that came down in 1862. Here travellers change their dresses for the waterproof garments usually worn for this expedition ; those of the ladies are exactly like those worn by the men—they consist of a pair of trowsers, a great-coat of oilskin, with a large hood which covers the head, and a pair of galoshes. Much amusement is thus derived, when the party meets again in front of the hotel, after the metamorphosis, for it is impossible to tell who is who, disguised as everybody is with this most unbecoming of all costumes, and of which I am sure the great Worth never even dreamt.

But here all the fun ceases, for the excursion is much too dangerous to be amusing or even pleasant.

The sensation one experiences is one of the most disagreeable. It is impossible to hear anything whatever but the roar of the cataract ; moreover, the spray borne by the wind makes one quite blind, and penetrates even into the ears. The rocks are so slippery that walking is almost impossible ; and when at last I arrived at the little wooden bridge, constructed at the very bottom of the falls, amidst the falling water, I was so tired and so bewildered that I could not enjoy the

glorious spectacle of the Horse-shoe fall seen from underneath.

The water kept rolling down in torrents over me, so that I could not open my eyes. Presently my feet slipped on the moss-covered wooden bridge, and I fell heavily upon it. Fortunately I did not lose my presence of mind, but kept firm hold of the hand-railing, the only thing that saved me from falling into the roaring, seething waters below, while my body hung half over them. Of course my guide, a strong negro of athletic frame, soon came to my rescue, and thus saved me from a sure death amidst the dash of the waters of Niagara Falls.

## V.

“From our own paths, our love’s attesting bowers,  
I am not gone;  
In the deep hush of midnight’s whispering hours,  
Thou art not alone!  
Not alone when by the haunted stream thou weepest;  
That stream whose tone  
Murmurs of thoughts the holiest and the deepest  
We two have known.”

MRS HEMANS.

I RETURNED to New York about the middle of November, after a short tour through Canada and the Northern States of the Union. I had seen a great deal in that time, but I could not say that my travels had done me much good in the way of bringing consolation to my sad and lonely spirit. At the end of five months my mind was in the same desponding condition in which the sudden death of my Conchita had left it.

When once more I took up my abode at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, I was in such low spirits that my friends began to get anxious about me, and one of them suggested that I should try spiritualism.

“I wonder,” he said, “Lord Carlton, that you

have never been at a *séance*. I am sure you would be just the man to be convinced."

"I have heard a great deal about spirits and table-turning in my time," I answered; "indeed, who has not heard of the famous Home, who for some time was the talk of the two continents; but in those days I was so happy with my wife, that I did not need to seek communications from another world."

"But now you have lost your dear wife, I am sure you need it. And I am convinced," he added, "that you would derive great consolation if you could obtain a true communication from her."

"I doubt it very much, my dear fellow," I said; "not that I doubt for one moment the possibility of holding communication with the other world,—for after all it is no more than the Church teaches and all believe,—but I cannot bring myself to hope that I shall ever see or communicate with my darling Conchita in this world. I am not a saint that she, an angel as she now is, should come and converse with, 'or appear to me.'"

"Without being a saint, have you not even a greater chance that she should come to you? To whom, indeed, should she appear in this world but to her husband, the father of her child? I am sure if any one needs consolation it is surely you. Now, do try; you will lose nothing by attending a *séance*, and you might derive a great



deal of good from it, for I do not think you are one of those who would attribute all the manifestations you might witness to mechanical arrangements and clever legerdemain."

"If such is the cause of the manifestations you speak of, I shall soon detect them, for I can tell you that I will be on my guard, and will have my eyes wide open all the time."

So I consented to go with my friend to visit a *medium*, as I believe the spiritualists call those magnetic batteries of theirs. It was some time before we could fix on one however; for I strongly objected to see a paid one, thinking that I would have naturally more faith in him if I could be sure he derived no profit from the proceedings. But such a *medium* could not be found; for neither my friend, who, by-the-by, was not a confirmed spiritualist, nor I, had any personal acquaintance with any one possessing the necessary qualifications, and no private person would have given a *séance* to total strangers, as we must necessarily have been to him.

At last we decided to go to Doctor Slade, whom we heard of as a very celebrated *medium*; and a very pleasant, gentlemanlike man we found him to be.

We repaired together to his house; but when I had announced the object of my visit to the doctor, my friend left me, and I entered the sacred room with him alone.

I was determined to detect the least sign of trickery on the part of the poor medium, so I never for one moment took my eyes from him during the whole time our *séance* lasted.

He first made me examine minutely the whole room, a small back drawing-room, lighted by the brilliant rays of the mid-day sun. Then we sat down to a small table in the centre of the room, when I was quite convinced that there was no possibility of deception whatever. He sat at the side and I at the top nearer the window, my feet resting on his the whole time, so that if he had made the slightest movement I must have necessarily felt it.

Thus we sat in silence for at least ten minutes, during which nothing happened, although he kept saying that he heard raps, that the table was beginning to move, and that the spirits had not as yet enough power.

Presently I did really hear a few indistinct raps which sounded to my ear wonderfully like the twittering of birds.

The doctor said the spirits were gaining force, and then asked *the table*, for there was no one present except myself, "Will the spirits present communicate?" Three loud taps came then, just under my hand, which, I was sure, he could not have produced. "Will the spirits write?" he asked, after a time. Three taps more came immediately. "That means yes," he said; "we

have established a code of signals between us, one tap means no ; two taps mean doubtful, and three taps mean yes." The table gave three taps more, and louder than ever as if corroborating his statement.

"Are you sure you are not doing all this?" I then said, utterly bewildered. I do not remember what he answered, but I could not help being reassured by his very kind and natural manner, and I was so convinced of his honesty that, until the end of the sitting, I never once more doubted of the genuineness of the manifestations.

After a few minutes more, he took up a slate that was lying on the table, he put it in my hand, and made me wash it well with a sponge on both sides, then he broke a little slate pencil with his teeth, and placed a very small little bit under the slate, so small, indeed, that it could easily move between the table and the slate, which was just a little raised by its wooden frame. He placed the slate upon the table, and I put my hand upon it. I could plainly see both Dr Slade's hands upon the table ; presently I began to hear and to feel the vibrations caused by the little piece of pencil moving under the slate as if it were writing upon it. I lifted it up when the writing ceased, and to my great surprise, I saw distinctly written in white upon the black surface of the slate, the words "*Concepcion Vargas.*"



I could not contain a cry of wonder ; there, before my very eyes, was the sweet name which my wife had borne ! Who had written it ? Surely not I, I had not moved my hands, and he, the medium, had not moved either, besides how could he have known her name ? He did not know mine, for I had been very careful not to tell him who I was, but even if he had heard it, how did he know my wife's name ?

I could not believe it, and yet there it was in black and white, and I held it in my trembling hand, fearing every moment, I must confess, it would vanish as it had come.

Doctor Slade took the slate from me, and made me clean it with the wet sponge, effacing all traces of those words, then he placed it again upon the table with the pencil underneath as it had been before.

"Do you know the spirit ?" he said to me.

I was determined not to give him any clue as to the relation between us, so I said, carelessly, "I think I do ; it must be a Spanish lady I met once in Seville."

No more words passed between us. He remained in his seat, and I placed my hand again upon the slate while the little pencil was writing underneath. I was quite anxious to see what was being written, but I did not dare to lift up the slate ; after ten minutes of suspense, the table gave



three raps. "It is the signal," said Dr Slade, "the spirits have finished."

I again lifted up the slate and found it covered all over with writing. Dr Slade took it first, but said he could not read it as it was in a foreign language, which he did not know—Italian he said.

I took it, it was in Spanish, the beautiful language of my wife. My agitation and my intense surprise can better be imagined than described.

I will try to translate this communication as well as I can, for it was the first I ever received from my angel wife ; but I fear it will lose much by being rendered into English.

"My own husband, my beloved Walter,—  
Cans't thou thus weep because thy love has entered a brighter sphere? Oh, Walter, how cans't thou be so sad when I am happy, thou too who didst first teach me not to fear death ; death ! what would life be without death ? a worm never to become a butterfly ! a dream of happiness never to be realised !

"And yet thou seest nought but the sad part of it, thou only seest the flower fading away before its time as it seems to thee . . . . and dost not perceive that it has gone to bloom in a glorious sunshine. Oh ! Walter, try to look beyond the tomb, you will see there is no sorrow in death, there should be joy ; but in spite of all

thy philosophy thou still entertainest doubts as to the future existence which awaits thee on this side of the grave.

“In thy tearful blindness thou hast thought the magnetic chain that bound us was severed, but it is not so, dear husband; that chain was fashioned by more than human hands, and not a link has broken or can ever break that binds my soul to thine.

“Try rather to see that a new link has been added, a link between thy world and the next—a link to bind thee nearer to God, because it will raise thy heart often to brighter spheres.

“Wouldst thou change the purposes of God? I left the world when my time had come, I left it to give birth to our child, the child whom thou hast neglected, the child whom thou hast deprived of a Father! And thou sayest still that thou lovest me! Oh Walter! I could never have believed this of thee. Ah! turn not thine eyes from our babe, see in him rather the sacred charge of thy wife whom thou thinkest gone. Yes, I am gone from thy sight, but not into another world. I am still by thy side, and shall constantly watch over thee until the day in which thou wilt join me here.

“Hast thou never felt a soft touch on the cheek, a gentle waving of the hair, a breath of tender sweetness on the brow? It was mine, oh! my husband; it was I who touched thee; I,

who seldom stir from thy side. In the middle of the ocean, on the heights of the White Mountains, in the desert prairies, under the falls of Niagara, I have been with thee. Were I still upon thy earth, I could not follow thee nearer than I now do. And yet thou still complainest!

“Oh! believe me, Walter, there is no sorrow in death—there should be joy.

“Think of me often, but with pleasure, not with tears in thine eyes, and mourning in thy heart. Think of our earthly love so soon now to become divine, think of our rambles in Scotland, when I was the disciple and thou the master,—where thou didst first open my eyes to the light of truth that now floods my spirit. Think of all this, Walter. Thought unites our souls.”

When I had finished the perusal of this communication, my eyes were full of tears. Could it have been my Conchita, my wife who had written this upon the slate? Dr Slade had not touched it since the moment it was put upon the table after having been thoroughly cleaned and washed by my own hands, besides he said, he did not know Spanish, and at all events he could not have known my Christian name, or that of my wife. Who then had written this communication?

I could not doubt my senses, and yet it seemed too wonderful to be true. I could scarcely bring myself to believe that it was my Conchita, my long mourned wife, who had thus come to



## THROUGH THE AGES.

me through a stranger, by means of a paid *medium* in a foreign land beyond the seas, to console me and dry my tears. After all, why should not Dr Slade know Spanish? Conchita surely is not the only one who can write in that language; this could then be no proof, besides the language in which the communication was expressed was not in the least like the language she would have used to me when on earth, but then I must take into consideration that she is no longer a material being, as she was then. But then, I thought, how could Dr Slade have written on the reverse side of the slate, when his hands were in sight on the table.

One thing struck me in this long writing, and that was the mention made of my little child. The writer was evidently displeased with my conduct towards him,—who but the mother could feel so deeply for a new-born babe? I felt all this as I sat there with my eyes fixed upon the slate, and the thought struck me, for the first time, that I had perhaps done wrong in abandoning my child, *her* child to the care of servants.

The doctor saw how moved I was by the writing, “direct spirit writing,” as he called it, and told me that I was a medium myself, and that in a few months I would not require his or any one else’s services, but that I should be able to obtain communications from the spirit world unaided.



I asked him what constituted a *medium*. This he could not tell me precisely. "It is a magnetic power allotted to some, by means of which the spirits of the departed can hold communication with those they have left on earth, a sort of bridge between this world and the next, what it consists of I cannot tell. I am a medium and so will you be in time, but further I cannot tell you."

I tried to conceal my doubts from him, he was so earnest about it, and he kindly *invited* me to go the next day in the evening and sit for the "materialisations," as he called them, or spirit forms, which he said we might, perhaps, succeed in obtaining.

So I departed from the doctor's house full of hope, and yet misgivings, a new sensation had taken possession of my being. Could it be possible that Conchita was still by my side? I dared not think so, yet I would have given anything to be convinced of the fact.

## VI.

“Será acaso verdad? Hay otros seres  
En otros mundos de eterna ventura,  
De que son débil copia los placeres  
De esta vida de misera amargura?  
No es ensueño de candidas mugeres  
Esa grata esperanza de dulzura?  
Porqué la eternidad está vedada  
En el fondo insondable de la nada?”

*Fernandez y Gonzales.*

I COULD not sleep that night. I was burning with excitement. I got up very early and took a sledge drive through the Central Park, that beautiful artificial garden which forms the centre of the island, and of which New York is so proud.

The morning was exceedingly cold, but clear and fine; the sky was blue above my head, and the sun shone brightly upon the snow-covered trees, forming a thousand different diamond-like sparks to glitter and sparkle on the hoar frost of the early morning.

The Park was deserted, not another sledge was visible upon the extensive trotting-ground or the boulevard beyond, nothing but snow everywhere, dazzling the eyes with its pure whiteness against

the dark blue sky above ; the lakes, generally so full of skaters, were also deserted at this early hour.

As I galloped along alone in my light sledge well-covered with furs, my thoughts were naturally drawn towards the strange phenomena of the preceding day.

“Can it be possible,” I said to myself, “that this park, apparently so empty, may be full of invisible beings who can watch over me, and yet whose presence I ignore, or knowing cannot perceive ?

“Yet why should it not be so ? We cannot see electricity, and yet we know it exists. Again, if we put a piece of sugar into a glass of water, and let it melt, we lose sight of it. I cannot see the sugar, and the water is as clear as it was before I put the sugar into it. Yet the sugar is there still, although invisible to my eyes.”

A thousand equally common occurrences which we witness every day, and therefore think nothing of, rushed through my mind.

“If I throw a silver coin into a basin full of nitric acid or aqua-fortis, does not the silver disappear entirely from my sight ? And the liquid, does it not remain as clear as before ? The silver becomes invisible. Why ? We cannot tell, but we cannot doubt the fact.

“Could we not, then, compare the piece of silver to a spirit which disappears from our sight

at the death of the material form that contained it?

“The silver is still in the basin, though invisible; there is also the nitric acid as before, and some chemist might tell me that he could get out the silver by introducing electricity into the acid, for which the silver has a strong *affinity*.

“Can that singular power called *mediumship* be something of this kind? That extraordinary faculty, which Dr Slade could not explain, and by means of which the invisible spirits of the departed are able to convince us of their continued existence, may it not resemble, at least in its secret power, the electricity which the chemist assures us has such an *affinity* for silver, that it can call it back again to our sight?

“Electricity! *affinity*! What are they? Can any one tell?

“We are still so ignorant that we are compelled to use words the true meaning of which we ignore.”

My thoughts wandering in this direction, took presently another form, as I thought of the hundreds of invisible things and forces which surround us, of which we are conscious, but which, however, we cannot see with our imperfect and limited vision. I concluded that it might very well be that there are other beings upon the very earth we inhabit of whose existence we are totally ignorant, whose attributes may be so different to ours



that we cannot perceive them with our, as yet, only partially developed and most limited senses. For who can say positively that the five senses belonging to human beings are the only possible senses that exist in this universe of which we know so little? The same as a blind man could not understand the sensation of sight, had he never possessed it, there may very well be other senses which we cannot comprehend, and which may yet very possibly exist very near us; so that many things may take place in nature which, not being in correspondence with our organisations, must remain for ever ignored by us, or at least so long as our spirit, or interior being, is confined in our present organisation, for our perceptions must be limited to its capabilities.

“But,” I said to myself, “do not the senses we possess suffice to hint to us the possible existence of other senses, not only different from ours, but most likely far more powerful and useful?”

“We must all admit, I think, that we are as yet ignorant of most things belonging even to our own sphere, and that outside of the impressions we receive, there may be an infinite number of others which we cannot perceive. I will explain myself.

“Sound is formed, we are told, by certain undulations which take place in the air, and which come to strike the membrane of our

tympanum, and thus give us the impression of different sounds. Man cannot possibly hear all sounds. When the undulations are too slow (under 40 per second), the sound is too low, our ear cannot catch it. When the undulations are too rapid (above 36,850 per second), the sound is too loud, our ear cannot appreciate it. Under and above these two limits of our audative organisation, innumerable sounds might exist of which we know nothing.

“The same reasoning may be also applied to light. According to Descartes’ theory, light proceeds from undulations in the ether of the universe (the undulatory theory is now, I believe, in full favour with all scientific men). The different aspects of light, the shades and the colours of objects, are due to undulations which strike our optic nerve, and thus give us the different impressions of light and darkness. Man cannot possibly see all that which is visible. When these undulations are too slow (under 458 trillions per second, light is too feeble ; our eye cannot perceive it. When the undulations are too rapid (above 727 trillions per second), light surpasses our organic faculty of perception, and becomes invisible for us. Above and below these two narrow limits, thousands of colours may exist which we cannot see. So I think that we are most reasonably and philosophically justified in asserting that there *may* exist beings in this

very world, by our very sides, which we can neither hear nor see, for innumerable undulations there are in nature which, not being in correspondence with our organisation, must necessarily remain ignored by us.

“Whether these beings may, by means of certain extraordinary conditions, ever become visible and audible to us, is a question I cannot answer.

“And yet,” I exclaimed, “did not our forefathers believe in the possibility of spirit apparitions?”

“All the old Bibles of the Ancients attest this, the Vedas, the Eddas, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, are full of spiritual visions and apparitions of angels. Almost all the ancient philosophers also believed in them, and even our own Bible is full of accounts of such supernatural visitors.

“Was it not an angel that appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and sent him on his work to deliver the Israelites from Egypt? It was angels that gave Moses the law on the Mount Sinai. In Joshua’s war an angel appeared, and professed himself to be the captain of the Lord’s hosts. It was an angel that chose a wife for Isaac, an angel delivered the three men from the fire, and Daniel from the lions’ den. Angels preached Christ to the shepherds; an angel preached to Cornelius; an angel delivered Peter and Paul. St John tells us that God first



revealed His will to Christ, Christ to the angels, the angels to him, he to the churches, and the churches to posterity. Angels even ministered to Christ Himself when He was hungry, and appeared in His agony strengthening Him.

“Can we call ourselves Christians, and yet doubt the possibility of spirit communication, when the Bible upon which our faith is based, bears such strong testimony to the fact.

“It is true that all this happened long ago, but if spirits could appear then, why should they not appear now? the conditions of the earth have not changed.

“Besides our church teaches us to believe in an infinity of other apparitions of a much more recent date. If the saints received visits from beings of another sphere, why should we not be able to receive them also? Have we not the assertion of St Augustine, who wrote, ‘I am convinced that my mother will come again to visit me and to give me advice, by revealing to me what awaits us in the future life?’

“Many persons seem to think that it is wrong to hold communication with those who have left their earthly bodies; but did not St Augustine, Santa Theresa, St Thomas, St Ignatius of Loyola, and a thousand others hold these communications, and yet no one has ever blamed them for doing so?”

The phases of modern spiritualism may per-



chance not be quite so holy as those visions of the saints, but must they be less real for this? and after all they *are* holy, when it is a mother, a sister, a wife who comes to console a broken heart.

I cannot yet say that I believe, and yet I am convinced that "*no fact in sacred or profane history is supported by a stronger array of proofs.*"

Can it be possible, I thought, that millions of people should believe this, if after all, the wonderful phenomena upon which their faith is based are only produced by more or less ingenious machinery and clever leger-demain? And it is not only the ignorant and uneducated crowd that believes in *séances* and in *mediums*, some of the wisest and first men of France, Italy, Spain, England and America believe in them, and profess to hold communications with the dead.

Some years ago the London Dialectical Society, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, Bart., M.P., appointed a committee to investigate spiritual phenomena. The committee was appointed on the 26th of February 1869, and after investigations and researches which lasted two years, it issued its report, which, with the evidence, forms a bulky volume. This committee was formed of some of the greatest men of science of the day, and its report was as follows:

1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture,

the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch—occur, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance.

2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person.

3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time, and in the manner asked for by persons present, and by means of a simple code of signals answer questions and spell out coherent communications.

One of the sub-committees of the Dialectical Society reported :—" Your committee studiously avoided the employment of professional or paid mediums. All were members of the committee, persons of social position, of unimpeachable integrity, with no pecuniary object, having nothing to gain by deception, and everything to lose by detection of imposture."

Such was the concise report of that body of intelligent and unprejudiced men, who so earnestly devoted themselves for the space of two years to the discovery of the truth. Since then, Mr Crookes has published some interesting papers in the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, of which he is the editor ; and Mr Alfred R. Wallace, the

well-known originator of the "Natural Selection" theory, has also written a magnificent article in the *Fortnightly Review*, under the head of "A Defence of Modern Spiritualism," which furnish us with ample proofs of their firm belief in the genuineness of these strange phenomena.

All this is really most bewildering, for after all, as Mr Crookes says in one of his able papers,—

"The supposition that there is a sort of mania or delusion which suddenly attacks a whole room full of intelligent persons who are quite sane elsewhere, and that they all concur to the minutest particulars, in the details of the occurrences of which they suppose themselves to be witnesses, seems to my mind more incredible than even the facts they attest."\*

And thus I passed the whole day arguing against myself. I wanted to believe, and yet dared not venture to do so, fearing to nurse a joyous hope of which perhaps time and common sense might afterwards deprive me, by convincing me that after all, all these wonderful phenomena which have, until now, baffled the greatest men of science of this age of enlightenment, are but an illusion of the senses.

\* W. Crookes, F.R.S., *Quarterly Journal of Science*, No. XLI.

## VII.

“ With a slow and noiseless footstep  
Comes that messenger divine,  
Takes the vacant chair beside me,  
Lays her gentle hand on mine.

“ And she sits and gazes at me  
With those deep and tender eyes  
Like the stars, so still and saint-like ;  
Looking downwards from the skies.”

LONGFELLOW.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening when I again entered Dr Slade's house. I was strongly moved as I ascended the stairs, and could hardly conceal my excitement.

We entered the séance-room and sat at the table as we had done the day before, I at the top and he at the side on my left hand, my feet resting as then upon his, by his express desire.

We sat in silence for nearly a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time raps came on the table. The room was well lighted, for a large five-light gasolier hung from the ceiling, three of whose burners threw a good light all around the small apartment.

The doctor asked the spirits if they could



manifest, upon which the physical manifestations began. The table heaved up and down, and was made heavy or light at my desire. A chair moved from the wall, drawn by some unseen agency, an accordion was played in mid-air, apparently all by itself, and quite unsupported by any visible hand, and several other wonderful things took place, all in the bright light of the three jets of gas.

But I must confess that all those wonders produced very little effect upon me, perhaps because I had gone prepared to doubt everything, perhaps because they seemed to me so very puerile and unmeaning; and after all, I had seen much more wonderful and impossible things done by *legerdemain*. The doctor wondered very much that I was not convinced by such extraordinary *tours de force*, and assured me that the spirits could do anything for me, for the conditions were perfect.

“You promised me,” I said, “that you would try to show me the spirit forms; do you think that you will be able to do so?”

“I do not know,” he answered. “It does not depend upon me, but I can try.” Thus saying, he put two of the gas-lights out, leaving only one, which, however, was quite enough to light the room, although this one he also lowered. But previous to doing so he opened a small closet, situated in the corner farthest away from the table, and got out of it a small curtain of black

calico, with a square hole in the centre, of about a foot square ; the curtain or calico was of about three feet in diameter measured each way. This he hung with a small string across the room, just before one end of the table, but a little above it, so that I could just see the light all round it.

Having finished these preparations he sat down again by my side to await the result.

“How is it,” I asked him, “that you need that black veil? Could the spirits not come without it?”

“Yes, they have done so, but it is always better to have something with a hole through which they can show themselves, as it saves them the trouble of materialising their whole form. Most mediums have a regular cabinet made of wood, inside which they are tied, but I find that this little curtain answers the purpose equally well, and does not lead to so much suspicion.”

“I often wonder, doctor, why it is that spirits always tap on tables and chairs. Why should they not also rap, and knock, and move about other things?”

“What other things?” he said. “Of course they could do it; but are not tables and chairs the objects mostly to be found in drawing-rooms and dining-rooms? They take what they find nearest at hand; in the open air they will rap on a gate or a tree.”

I said no more for fear of spoiling the *séance*,

and contented myself by holding his hands tightly in mine, while my feet rested upon his.

Another quarter of an hour passed, during which time the piece of pencil wrote, as it had done the day before, all by itself (at least so it seemed to me), upon the slate.

"I will try to show myself if I am able," it first wrote. Then, after a time,

"You are too excited, Walter. I find it very difficult to communicate," and this was signed "*Conchita*."

At last : "*I will do my best to-night, my dear husband, but you must not expect too much. I would advise you not to waste your power by sitting just now. In a few months I will be better able to appear to you, and perhaps without the aid of any other medium ; at present I cannot. But do not think that I will leave you in the meantime. Remember that I am always by your side. When you want me I will come. This will be my sign.*" And then I felt the pressure of a cold kiss upon my brow. I looked round and saw nothing near me ; the doctor had not moved and was looking another way.

The curtain before us began now to move a little. I kept my eyes fixed upon the opening in it. A misty haze began slowly to form, as it were, on the inner side of it. It was about the size of a person's head, and became gradually whiter.



It grew more and more distinct, and it seemed to come gradually nearer to the opening. After a few minutes I could distinctly perceive a female face, but alas! it might have been the face of any woman. I could discover nothing in it which reminded me of the beloved countenance of my lost Conchita.

Light seemed to proceed from this apparition, it seemed so luminous that suddenly the thought struck me that if I were to put out the gas I could see it more distinctly. I made this suggestion to Dr Slade; he shuddered and warmly opposed it. It was easy to see that he disliked the idea of darkness. But my curiosity was so great that all of a sudden I rose from my chair and deliberately extinguished the light. Dr Slade gave a wild cry of alarm when he suddenly found himself in total darkness.

I kept my eyes steadily fixed upon the white figure before me; in that supreme moment of anxiety I felt no fear. Not so, however, the Medium; there was no longer any occasion for me to retain my hold upon his hand, for in his alarm he was grasping mine till he almost hurt me with his convulsive clutch.

The apparition now became more and more luminous and distinct, but still I could not recognise the face. I could no longer distinguish the black curtain in the darkness, and saw nothing but the white misty form, which, however, cer-



tainly had nothing to me alarming in its appearance.

Presently the whole figure came out of the mist and moved towards me, to my very side. As I gazed at it with such an intensity that all my senses seemed concentrated in that gaze, it suddenly seemed to expand, if I may so describe it,—it intensified, and flashed out for one moment before me,—and then I recognised my lost wife! Yes, it was Conchita! my angel, my darling! I could doubt no longer. She stood before me for one moment, radiantly beautiful; her fair face illumined by no earthly light, but as if bright by her own purity, as we can imagine would be that of an angel of light!

I could not describe her dress, so instantaneous was her appearance. I only saw that it was white and dazzling, and that her beautiful golden curls encircled her fair head as with a glory, while some of her bright curls hung over her bosom.

The beautiful vision stretched out her arms towards me; at that moment I felt,—not a touch, but rather the sensation of an electric shock run through my frame, and I fell senseless upon the floor.

. . . . .

When I recovered my senses I found myself lying upon a sofa in the front room. Dr Slade was by my side, looking pale and agitated, and was bathing my temples with eau-de-Cologne.

I soon recovered myself, and was able to talk. I asked for an explanation, but he could give me none. As soon as I put out the gas he said, that he closed his eyes, not daring to look upon a spirit in the dark ; that when I fell, he rushed from the room and returned with a lighted candle. He then found that I had fainted, and he added, " It was very rash of you to put out the light ; I never dare do it, it is too dangerous."

I went back to the séance room, and what was my astonishment when I found there, lying on the ground in the same place where I had fainted, a small curl of golden hair !

It was no dream then, the fair vision that had appeared to me was no hallucination of my agitated brain. The piece of hair was in my hand ; I could not now doubt the truth of what I had seen.

But was it really Conchita ? I could not tell. I had thought so at the time, but now I again began to doubt. Everything in the room looked so common-place, so matter-of-fact, that it seemed impossible that the spirit of an angel could ever have entered it.

The Doctor could give me no explanation of the curl, so I put the golden ringlet into my pocket-book, and thanking him warmly for this extraordinary séance, for which he would take no fee, as he said he had invited me to it, I left the house.

And thus finished the few experiences I have ever had of mediums, séances, and spirit-rapping, for the events which shortly followed these phenomena rendered all these things useless to me for the future.

[NOTE.—The apparition described in the preceding chapter is not imaginary, but was really witnessed exactly in the manner related by the author, at the house of Dr Slade, 143d Street, New York.]

## VIII.

“Se a ciascuno l'interno affanno  
Si leggesse in fronte scritto,  
Quanti mai che invidia fanno  
Ci farebbero pietá.”

*Metastasio.*

SHORTLY after the events recorded in the last chapter, I left New York for Washington, where I had some business with our minister, Sir Garnet Howard.

The Americans call their capital “the city of magnificent distances,” but I should be inclined to call it “the city of magnificent projects.” Washington is certainly a town of the future. The streets are wide and straight, but the houses are far apart. Here and there a grand public building rises in all the pride of its gorgeous marbles, and magnificent colonnades and statues, from amidst green fields and modest little cottages. Here—as in all other towns throughout the States—the streets are numbered and designed long before they possess a single habitation. A few little shops, here of course dignified by the name of stores, decorate some of the streets, which are mostly planted with trees, through which are



visible at intervals a few country houses painted white, with red roofs and green shutters, and almost all encased with wood, which gives them that appearance peculiar to American country houses.

Such is Washington, the capital of the United States,—its principal streets resembling the outskirts of a great city, rather than the capital of one of the greatest nations of the world. The similarity is indeed so great, that when once one begins to institute the comparison, it is recalled to one's mind at every turn. One is always expecting to enter the real city, which one imagines must lie somewhere beyond these long wandering suburbs. It was well described by a lady some thirty years ago as “a great wide rambling red-brick image of futurity, where nothing is, but everything is to be.” And it is still “*to be*,” for the Americans themselves allow that it scarcely *is*; and the only difference I would note is, that the red brick is now the exception, having been superseded by more sightly edifices of white stone, or of what would represent it.

Many large and important cities in this go-ahead country have sprung up and prospered on spots where large forests stood, and have become great, busy, important centres of life and commerce, since the description of Washington flowed from that facile pen, but its reputation as a city is still in the future, for it is still wide and rambling

with large spaces between its buildings—no doubt to be filled up with handsome edifices when the present inhabitants lie mouldering in the dust. The reason of this anomaly amidst such a busy, town-constructing, energetic people as the Americans, is no doubt to be found in the fact, that Washington can never become a great commercial centre, and that the energetic minds of the energetic men who come to it year after year, are too wholly absorbed by, and devoted to the public weal, for which they daily exert their talents and great oratorical powers in the Senate and Congress, to the exclusion of every thought of building, even of log huts and grand hotels. And yet these exist in Washington, and are crowded to overflowing when Congress is sitting, and oftentimes people have been obliged to sleep in the Elevator, or Lift, if they would recline at all. When not overcrowded, however, the hotels of Washington possess every comfort and luxury—as where do they not in this model land of modern comforts? Indeed, I must say that, go where he will in the United States, the traveller is sure to find not only a good bed, but a more truly comfortable and luxurious one than he will find anywhere in England, I might say anywhere in all Europe; and I should be correct, were it not that French beds have probably served for the model of the modern American couch of comfort. After this well-deserved tribute to American hotel accom-

modation, I will continue my ramble through this rambling city.

The public buildings of Washington are truly beautiful, particularly the Capitol, which I believe is the largest building of white marble in the world, and which rises above the city to a considerable height upon an imposing eminence. The Post-Office, the Patent Office and the Treasury, three magnificent structures also in white marble, should not pass unnoticed.

All these buildings are much more splendid than those which fulfil the same destiny in the European capitals. But Washington is rich in monuments. The Smithsonian Institute, the White House, the City Hall, and all its numerous museums and exhibitions, are fine, and possess the greatest architectural beauties; and if public buildings could make a town, Washington would undoubtedly be one of the handsomest cities on the face of the earth.

My stay there was not a very long one, but I could not pass through it without this slight mention, as it was there I first met Lilian Leigh, the beautiful American lady who was destined to play such an important part in my after life, even after I had quitted the States.

Lilian Leigh was an American by birth, and like all the daughters of her country, beautiful and accomplished in the utmost degree. I will not attempt to describe her, for I fear that my



pen could never do justice to her beauty. Suffice it to say that she was neither a brunette nor a blonde ; that she was tall and graceful, her figure being slight and flexible ; and that she had that indescribable something which makes most American women so charming in the eyes of men.

But in spite of all her fascinations, the beautiful American was far from bearing any comparison with the high-souled and noble-minded wife I had so recently lost. My readers must not accuse me of infidelity to the memory of my angel Conchita, when I thus describe the impression first made upon me by the American beauty. I still loved my lost Conchita above all earthly things, but Conchita no longer belonged to earth ; she had returned home to the heaven from whence she had come to bless me for a few short years, and to give me a foretaste of what heaven might be ; and Lilian Leigh was thrown constantly in my path, and was the only person with whom I had conversed with any degree of pleasure since my sad bereavement.

In spite of all the wonderful phenomena I had witnessed in New York, I still could not bring myself to believe entirely in the possibility of spirit communication. The time that had elapsed had effaced the vivid impressions which had so startled and bewildered me at the time ; and the idea that I had only made myself the subject of ridicule by seeking to communicate with the



spirit of my dead wife, was an *idée fixe* in my mind. All my friends had laughed at what they called my folly and delusion, and talked of hidden machinery and clever cheating, till I almost began to think I had been duped—I will not say robbed of my money, as my good friends assured me I had been—because I must do Dr Slade the justice to say, that he had most kindly invited me of his own accord, the night I beheld the wonderful apparition, and I was therefore sure that he had had no mercenary motive in deceiving me.

Only too happy to try and forget my sorrows in excitement of some kind, it came to pass that I had plunged for one moment into the whirlpool of society as soon as I arrived in Washington. Accepting one invitation had rendered it impossible to refuse another, and at the very first I had made the acquaintance of Lady Leigh.

Lady Howard—the amiable wife of our minister—had introduced me to her at the Embassy, where she was staying on a visit.

I there learnt her romantic and sad history, which added a great deal to her attraction; and I am sure no one could have passed a day near this beautiful and unfortunate woman without some feeling of interest and affection being awakened for her in his heart—even were that heart, like mine, devoted wholly to the memory of another.

She was the daughter of a very rich planter from Louisiana ; while quite a young girl, she had been sent to live with her aunt in Paris—an American lady, the wife of a great banker in that city—this accounted for her refined and almost European manners, and her perfect breeding. I saw in a moment that Lady Leigh was a woman of the world, and of the best world ; highly accomplished, accustomed to the best society, in which she had acquired a certain *cachet* only to be obtained from it ; but her aunt died when she was scarcely twenty, and she had been obliged, in consequence, to return to America, though she had lost her mother some years before this, and so her father, who did not care to take his beautiful daughter to his distant estate in the south, purchased a house in New York, where he settled down with her for its mistress.

Their residence in New York, however, was not a very long one. Sir George Leigh, a young Englishman, who had just come over as secretary to the British Legation, fell in love with the American belle, and her millions, and soon after married her, thus carrying off the prize from many rivals.

I believe from what I learnt in the course of conversation from her friends, that there had been little or no love in the match. He was a delicate, fair-complexioned young Englishman, of good family, but poor ; he wanted energy, life,

experience of the world, and was besides very delicate in health.

People whispered that he was in a consumption when he married her ; whilst she was a gay, bright, beautiful woman, full of life and spirit, with many talents and accomplishments ; blooming with youth and health, and quite a woman of the world, as I have before said. But the *convenience* of the marriage was undoubted, for he had wanted money, and she was not sorry to obtain rank ; if only that of an English baronet's wife. So they married and lived at Washington, as happily as might be for some years. The American war had broken out soon after this, and like so many others, Lilian's father was ruined completely. The cotton plantation which had before been such a mine of wealth to the family, had now gone to utter ruin ; with the loss of the slaves, all the works were stopped, the warehouses were burnt, and the whole place gone to destruction. For such were the sad consequences of the war for the unfortunate southern states of the union.

The poor old man did not long survive the loss of his wealth, and shortly after the sad events of that dreadful war he had died in the arms of his disconsolate daughter at her house in Washington.

The health of her husband, Sir George Leigh, was also failing fast. The anxiety of the last few



years of the war had been too much for his already delicate constitution, and the doctors said that he would never be able to recover in the cold climate of North America. He was, however, obliged to wait till the end of the long protracted war before he could safely leave the capital for a more genial climate.

At last the peace was signed, and he was able to quit Washington before the dreaded cold of the coming winter.

He sailed from New York for the Spanish island of Cuba, where his wife promised to follow him in the next boat. Unavoidable circumstances, however, prevented her from fulfilling her promise, and more than two months elapsed before she was able to quit her estate in Louisiana, where she had been obliged to go after her father's death, to attend to her affairs.

Sir George had borne the sea voyage well enough, and had arrived safely at Havana, where he was comfortably lodged at one of the best hotels of the place ; but the change of climate, that would have done him so much good, had he been able to make it a few years sooner, only served now to shorten his career. The evil had taken firm hold of him, and the first appearance of relief he had derived from the sea voyage did not continue long after he arrived at the island ; neither its balmy climate nor pure air were able to do the poor young fellow any good. His fate



was sealed. He must fade away as so many others have done upon these fair shores of the Gulf of Mexico, a victim to the hard treatment experienced from the severe northern climate, which had been so ill suited to his feeble constitution.

I will relate the rest as she herself told it to me, one afternoon, leaning on my arm with her eyes full of tears, as we paced together the marble galleries of the capitol.

“When my poor dear George first landed on that dreadful island, that was destined to be his grave, and whose climate I fear accelerated his death, whatever the doctors may say to the contrary, he used to write me every boat. But I am afraid I shall tire you, Lord Carlton, my story is so sad ; ah, so sad !” and she sighed deeply as she pronounced those last words.

“Do not think me so unfeeling, dear Lady Leigh, as to tire of hearing an account of your sorrows. I assure you that my own sad story has made my heart more sensitive and compassionate to the trials of others ; though I cannot remember a time in my life when I could have been indifferent to a tale of distress,” I said, really moved by the tears which stood in her bright blue eyes.

She looked up, and cast a look of thanks upon me, then leaning anew on my arm she continued,

“How kind you are, Lord Carlton ; how very

kind to feel so much for me, a poor lonely widow as I am. Ah! my misfortunes have been great indeed, nobody can tell how I have suffered;—and I was so young then—although it only happened two years ago,” she added quickly, casting another tender look at me through her tears.

A gentleman came up now. As he approached us in the large marble rotunda, my fair companion stopped him.

“Ah, Mr Everett, I am so glad to see you. I must compliment you on that beautiful speech; ah, what a beautiful speech, no other man in the States could have made one like it. . . . When you spoke about the negroes, I thought I should have died with laughter—I understood it all, you wicked man—I was in the diplomatic gallery with Lord Carlton. But I forget, I must introduce you—Lord Carlton—the Honourable Mr Everett, a great friend of mine—we are great friends, are we not? In spite of your speeches against slavery during the war; Lord Carlton has only lately crossed the pond, as I believe you call that dreadful ocean I so abominate, and I am doing the honours of our country to him.”

Mr Everett, as I afterwards learnt, is a member of the American Senate, and although a northerner, a great friend of Lady Leigh's, which accounted for her familiarity with him.

On this occasion, however, he was in a great

hurry, as he was on his way to dress for an official dinner, as he told us, and after a few commonplace remarks, during which he pointedly asked me how I liked America and the Americans, he left us once more to ourselves.

Lady Leigh leant again on my arm, and for some minutes we walked on in silence, making our way as well as we could, through the crowd of senators, representatives, diplomatists, ladies, Indian chiefs, idlers, and stall-keepers, which is generally collected during session, under the magnificent rotunda between the two houses, and which forms the most fashionable lounge and promenade of the city.

We crossed the central hall and the library, and entered into one of the stately marble corridors which overlook the city on the other side of the building ; this corridor was deserted, for the idle crowd which frequents the capitol was at the time anxiously listening to the progress of some interesting debate which was going on, as Lady Leigh told me, in the House of Representatives.

"It is so consoling to have a friend to open one's heart to," she said, with a sigh, after some minutes. "I have suffered so much ! One day while I was still in Louisiana I received a telegram telling me how ill my poor husband was. Imagine how cruel it was of those people at Havana to frighten me so ! It never occurred to them to break the news to me by degrees, but



they just said that my presence was necessary, and that I must go at once if I ever hoped to see my husband alive. Oh, it was cruel! I turned sick, and cold, and it nearly made me faint, but of course I went. My husband's life was at stake, so I sacrificed myself, and went by the Mississippi; exposing myself to be blown up, or burnt, and God knows what besides,—but what could I do? It was the nearest way, so I braved everything, every danger, and in two days I was at New Orleans.

“But, once there, new troubles awaited me. I was so unaccustomed to travel alone, that of course I made a mess of it, and missed the steamer that was to leave for the Havana that very day, through my over-anxiety to be on board in time. The owner of the hotel probably wished to keep me there for a few days. I cannot tell, but he undertook to convey my luggage on board while I drove round to see the town, which was quite new to me. When I reached the pier I found my luggage had not arrived, so hastened back to the hotel. Whether it went by some other streets I know not, but at the hotel they told me my luggage was on board; and when I returned again to the pier I found the man standing in the midst of my packages, and the steamer gone! My heart was very, very heavy as I returned to the hotel, and I wept very bitter tears that night, and wrung my hands in despair, when I thought of my poor George, alone and ill in a foreign land.



“I was obliged to remain three days in New Orleans ; you may imagine in what a state of mind, without the possibility of receiving either letters or telegrams from my husband. I was indeed miserable ! I knew no one in the place, and took a perfect loathing to it. There was no means of continuing my journey before the boat of the following week, unless I would make the voyage in a nut-shell of a sailing-vessel that was sailing on the evening of the third day. My impatience to be with my poor George was so great, that I did not hesitate, and determined to run all risks rather than remain inactive three days longer in New Orleans. I had no one to advise me, or to convince me that I was probably risking my life, and that I should not arrive a day sooner than I should have done had I waited for the regular boat of the following week, and so I went in the little sailing-vessel. Ah ! no one can tell what I suffered in that little ship. My maid and I were the only females on board. The cabins were miserable, the cooking abominable. Providence fortunately favoured us in the weather, which was smooth and lovely. What would have become of me had it been rough and stormy I dread to think. At last we sighted the Morro Castle, but it was dusk, and we had to rock about all night, and wait for the daylight before we could round it and enter the harbour, because no

vessels are allowed to enter after a certain gun is fired in the evening. You can better imagine my feelings than I can describe them, as I passed long hours on the deck gazing at that immense revolving light; alternating, like my hopes and fears, between light and darkness. At daylight we crowded all sail and entered the harbour, but it was in the wake of the large and commodious steamer, in which I might have made the voyage if it had not been for my impatient haste!

“Directly I landed I hastened to the hotel where I knew my poor George was, but instead of my husband I found General Herbert, the American Consul, who evidently was waiting for me.

“Ah! how can I tell you the rest! He broke the dreadful news to me. I was, of course, much overcome. The privations of my hurried journey, and the suddenness of the blow, brought on a violent fever. I was obliged to keep my bed for two weeks, during which time dear Mrs Herbert, who is an angel of goodness, and who lived at the same hotel, nursed me like a daughter, and consoled me with kind words and good advice. She told me how my poor dear George had died just a week before I arrived, with my name on his lips. If I had not missed the steamer at New Orleans I should have been in time, but would it have done me any good? Perhaps it all happened for

the best. Perhaps the parting scene would have been more than I could have borne and lived ; and though I would have given the world to have seen him once again, I could have done nothing for him, poor darling ! But it was very sad, very sad, indeed, for me to be left alone, a widow, at the age of twenty-five ! Ah ! Lord Carlton, you can pity me ; you who have such a feeling heart, you who have also lost a beloved companion recently. Ah ! you know how sad it is to be left alone !” And the lovely widow lifted her tearful eyes till they met mine, and found them almost suffused in a rush of sympathetic tears.

“ What made it still worse was that he was no longer there. I mean to say, that seeing I did not come, they had sent his dear remains to New York. Only conceive, I must have crossed him on my way to the island !”

“ Your story is indeed a sad one,” I said ; “ but I hope you will always consider me as a true friend. We can sympathise with one another, for we have both lost the one dearest to our hearts.”

At that moment the corridor was all of a sudden invaded by the idle crowd. The debate had finished, and the senators and their ladies were gaily discussing the events of the day as they walked through the galleries towards the Rotunda. We got presently mixed up amongst the gay

ladies and the excited politicians, and my fair companion soon regained her spirits, and seemed to have forgotten her sorrows as she discussed the affairs of the nation with her numerous friends and admirers.



## IX.

“ Dicen que pasas los dias  
Contemplandote al espejo,  
Por fuera eres muy bonita  
Pero? Te has visto por dentro?  
Tu alma segun aseguran  
No se parece a tu cara  
Y luego diran que el rostro  
Es el espejo del alma!”

*Spanish Romance.*

THE conversation I have just narrated will, I think, give to my readers a very fair idea of Lilian Leigh's character. An acute observer would perhaps discover that in reality there was very little in her; but, nevertheless, it was impossible not to admire her as the tears suffused her soft eyes leaning on my arm, or when she laughed gaily with her other friends. She was beautiful, there was no doubt of that; and her sweet, innocent, and winning ways had won for her the sympathy of all who knew her. She was really fascinating.

She lived at the embassy with Lady Howard, and mixed a great deal in the diplomatic circle, of which she was the acknowledged belle. That she was a coquette no one doubted for a moment; but, being a widow and an American,

her conduct, not perhaps in accordance with the strictest laws of English society, was passed over with every indulgence.

The world pitied her, and was kind to her, perhaps not so much on account of the husband she had lost, as for the millions which, although lost to her for the present, might on some future day change the poor young widow into one of the wealthiest women in America. For people knew well that the estates which the war had ruined for the time being, belonged to her still, and would, now that the war was over, become every year more and more valuable, if properly managed.

Somehow or other, wherever I went I met Lady Leigh, so that, whether I would or not, I was always in her company. I was not sorry for this—far from it. It is true that, if I had been left to myself, I should not have gone after her; but as chance always threw us together, I found her society most agreeable. She had a great deal of *esprit*; although she possessed no real talent, her conversation, if not of a very high character, was amusing; she knew so much about what was going on in the world, so many interesting anecdotes about everybody, that, somehow or other, time never seemed to hang heavy on one's hands when near her.

Her agreeable conversation gave you the idea that there was a great soul hidden in that lovely form; but whenever I tried to explain to her

some of the philosophical speculations which have always been my delight, she invariably contrived to turn the subject of conversation.

"I hate philosophy and philosophers, Lord Carlton," I remember her saying on one occasion ; "I take the world as I find it, and do not trouble my head about such nonsense."

"Nonsense you call it ! To me philosophy is life ; the present would be but a blank to me if I were not able to speculate about the future. Do you take no interest, Lady Leigh, in knowing what awaits us on the other side of the grave ?"

"No, I do not ; and no sensible woman should. We leave such idle dreams to you men ; and do not expose ourselves to ridicule, as you do, by speculating about what we never can know. I suppose you like a woman to be learned and strong-minded—a blue stocking, in fact ; one who would walk about with cropped hair and manly continuations, like Dr Mary Walker, whom you remarked the other day in the Capitol ; a woman who can talk big, and discuss science like a man. I hate such anomalies. I like a man to be a man, and a woman to be a woman. Only plain women and old maids fight for woman's rights. I find my eyes quite powerful enough to *rule* men, without any need of special rights. No man has ever ventured to deny us the gift of fascination, which, after all, is the most powerful weapon in a woman's hands."

By this and other conversations, I soon learned that it was useless to waste my time in arguing with her, and I came at last to the conclusion that but few women are gifted with so great a heart and so speculative a mind as my lost Conchita had been.

Lilian Leigh was very amusing and entertaining while in society, but out of her sphere I must confess she was little better than a nonentity. Whenever I started any serious subject she instantly turned the conversation, and gave me to understand that such things were too dry or too learned for women's ears. The colour of a ribbon was in her eyes far more important than all the wisdom of the world put together.

She was a Catholic by birth and education, but I am afraid her religion did not much occupy either her head or her heart. She was very bitter, nevertheless, against Protestants, whom of course she firmly believed destined to perdition. However, she did not let this thought trouble her much. I remember one Sunday accompanying her to High Mass; Father Taylor was going to preach, and the little church was of course as crowded as it could be. At the door we met a great friend of hers, a lady from Louisiana, who was married to a senator.

"How do you do, Ethel? How lovely you look, dear," said my fair companion, as she kissed her friend on both cheeks.



“So you have come to hear dear old Father Taylor! What a beautiful sermon he gave us last Sunday! By the by, I did not see you at church. Were you here?”

“No,” answered Lady Leigh, “I had a dreadful headache, but I came to early mass instead; it is so much shorter, you know.”

“You wicked little thing! But the fault carried its own punishment,” added her friend, with a sarcastic smile, “for you missed seeing my new dress, which everyone admired and pronounced a great success.”

“Oh, if I had known that, I would not have missed the High Mass for anything. But you look lovely to-day. . . . Is that dress from Worth?”

“Yes, it came last Wednesday. How kind of you, dear Lilian, to admire it? Do you know what Father Taylor is going to preach about?”

“No, not in the least. I only hope it won’t be a very long sermon. Will you come and sit in our seats?”

“No, I have promised Mrs Morrison to sit in hers. But do look here—what a dress! Ah! it is Opaline Fitz-Albert. It is just what I should have expected from her. Some people do not know the difference between the house of God and the *Opera*. I should be quite ashamed to appear at church in such a dress! By the by, Lilian, how do you get on with Lady

Howard ? It must be a great mortification to you to live with Protestants. There is nothing so bad in the world as bad example. How do you manage, for instance, on Fridays ? Do you have a dinner cooked for yourself alone ? ”

“ Oh dear, don’t talk to me of that. When I think of it, it makes me shudder. Just fancy, I have been obliged to give up fasting altogether ; for Lady Howard’s cook makes such a mess of fish dinners. She knows no more about dressing fish than you or I do. Ah ! when I remember the *elegant dinners* we used to have at home on Fridays ! That was something like fasting ! Oh ! there’s nothing like a French cook. French cooks understand all these things so well ! ”

“ Do you mean to say, Lilian,” exclaimed her friend, thoroughly shocked, “ that you eat meat on fast days ? ”

“ Well, but how can I help it ; you would not have me starve ! ”

After this we entered the church in silence, and the two friends separated. I accompanied Lady Leigh to her friend’s pew. “ The conceited hypocrite,” she exclaimed, as soon as she had crossed herself with her little delicate hand, compressed into the smallest pale lavender glove. “ The conceited hypocrite ! She pretends to be shocked at my living with Lady Howard, whom she calls a heretic. I suppose she has forgotten that her husband is also a Protestant ! Just

fancy, Lord Carlton, that woman is considered by some people quite a beauty! I know you do not think so, just look at her there, on the other side, flirting away with Colonel Armstrong. Oh it is disgraceful, and in church too! But look at that lady behind her. What a bonnet! Why! it's Cornelia! She looks quite pretty though through that veil."

Finding that I did not answer, she knelt down again upon the soft red velvet cushion, and casting a look of adoration towards the high altar, which blazed with candles and wax tapers, she again crossed herself, this time finishing by hiding her face completely in her pretty little hands.

For two minutes she remained in this interesting attitude; then she sat down again by my side, retied the elegant knot of her bonnet, deposited her jewelled prayer-book upon the desk before her, and began to cast little searching looks around her through her long eye-lashes, smiling right and left as she met the eye of some friend or acquaintance. At last she turned to me, and asked me to look out the place for her in the missal.

"You must be very quiet, Lord Carlton," she said, "for Madame Guerin is going to sing, and I am so fond of music!"

The holy service began and finished in due time, accompanied by various little running remarks

on the part of my fair friend. After a long, wearisome, and superficial sermon, she said, turning to me,—“What a beautiful sermon! There, I am sure if Lady Howard had heard it, she would have become a Catholic at once. Ah, Father Taylor is a charming man; so gentlemanly, and so very clever! I really must ask her to invite him to her next dinner party. Besides he is my father confessor,” she added, looking at me wickedly. “I see you understand.”

Shortly after this the blessing was pronounced, and we left the church.

I only mention these scenes, which may appear but trivial, in order to convey to my readers, if possible, a true idea of Lilian Leigh’s character, which, I am sure, I should fail to do in any other way.

One day Lady Leigh told me that she had received an invitation from Mrs Herbert, the wife of the American Consul in the Havana, asking her to spend a month or so with her in the beautiful island of Cuba.

“And will you accept it?” I asked her.

“Yes, I think so; although I have suffered so much in that island it is too lovely a spot to be despised. Besides I have many friends there, and dear Mrs Herbert and the General were so kind to me all through my troubles, that I think it would seem almost ungrateful not to accept their kind invitation. So I shall go.”



“And will you leave all your friends in this way, just in the midst of the season?”

“They won’t miss me, I am sure, Lord Carlton. Ah! all are not like you, so kind, so considerate, so agreeable. By-the-by, Lord Carlton, why don’t you go with me to Cuba? You have nothing particular to do in Washington, so I am sure you had better go with me.” This abrupt invitation was given in that true-hearted, plain-spoken American fashion, which one finds so difficult to decline. I did not promise to accompany the lovely widow however, on her expedition to the Spanish West Indies; but I did not say no, and she, of course, took it for granted that I should be her escort.

## X.

“ Ah ! d’une ardeur sincère  
Le temps ne peut distraire,  
Et nos plus doux plaisirs  
Sont dans nos souvenirs.  
On pense, on pense encore  
A celle qu’on adore,  
Et l’on revient toujours  
A ses premiers amours.”

ETIENNE.

Two months had passed away since the conversations I have narrated in the last chapter.

At last, after a few days’ hesitation, I decided to accompany Lady Leigh on her trip to Cuba. An uncle of hers, Professor Farren, was also to be of the party, so that I no longer had occasion to dread the world’s gossip, which world would certainly have thought fit to lift up its hands and be scandalised, if I had ventured to travel alone with the young and handsome widow.

At first I had determined not to accompany her ; but the dreaded idea of being deprived of her society,—superficial and trifling as it was,—made me change my mind. I was alone in the world, without friends and even without hopes ; and man upon this earth needs some companion-

ship,—some one who at least appears to feel an interest in his thoughts and feelings. Without this *some one* life would be worse than a blank, it would be torture. My thoughts were so sad and so disheartening since my wife's death that I was only too glad to avoid them, and even to endeavour to forget, if possible, the happy past, in the excitement of the fleeting pleasures of the present.

Lilian Leigh was the first woman fate had thrown in my way since Conchita's death; and although I could not help perceiving her inferiority to the latter, I clung to her as a drowning man clings to the slight plank which alone is left to save him from the dark abyss.

Conchita appeared now to me as a happy dream, too beautiful to have ever been. True, I thought it impossible ever to find another woman equal to her,—so beautiful, so wise, so good, so superior in every way,—and thus I tried to console myself, as well as I could, with the American beauty, whom people thought I so much admired. Ah! how often does the world mistake our feelings towards those it most delights to couple us with! And yet, perhaps, the world was, in this case, better able to judge of my sensations than I was myself.

Lilian Leigh was thus given over to me by universal report, and I, clinging to her society, as a matter of course tried to endow her in my

imagination with all the talents and high qualities which I would have wished her to possess; as well as with those few which she actually manifested; till I sometimes metamorphosed her in my mind into the perfect ideal of womanhood I had conceived in my wildest dreams of supreme happiness; though I must confess she would not have been able to recognise herself had she known them.

We were to meet at New York, where she was to go with her uncle, Professor Farren, direct; and in the meantime I spent a few weeks in Philadelphia, that most enjoyable of all American cities.

Philadelphia is one of the largest of these cities, although, perhaps, New York possesses more inhabitants; but Philadelphia is by right the historical city of the Union, for in it was signed, in July 1776, the Declaration of Independence, which gave birth to the great Republic. It is also full of mementos of Washington, William Penn, Franklin, Rittenhouse, Bartram, Lafayette, Jefferson, Morris, Talleyrand, Thomas Penn, Lincoln, Grant, &c.

As every one knows the old town was planned by William Penn, who afterwards gave his name to the whole State in the year 1682, and served first of all as a Quaker settlement. Indeed, it retains to this day its Quaker air, although nearly all the original Quaker families for whom it was built have long since disappeared.



The city is built with mathematical accuracy ; all the streets are straight and of equal breadth, running due north and south, east and west, with the distinction that those running east and west are named after native trees, and those running north and south are *numbered* from the banks of the Delaware westwards.

In the centre, where Fourteenth and Market Streets meet, there is a large square, in which the municipal buildings of the town will shortly be erected ; and in the centre of the other four quarters of the city there are also four other squares, which have been called the lungs of the city. The houses are numbered alternately, and follow the order of the streets ; thus, Front Street being No. 1, the house next west of it is No. 100 ; at Second Street, though the first 100 is not exhausted, a second series begins ; and in this way, after a little mathematical calculation, a person can always tell you exactly in what part of the city he is, or in what direction he wants to go. If the number of the nearest house is 4081, for instance, he knows that Fortieth Street is east of him, and that the next street west is Forty-first Street.

Market Street is the principal artery of the city, and runs its one hundred feet of width from the Delaware to the Schuylkill, in a perfectly straight line ; it is, however, entirely a commercial street, lined with shops or stores, as they are here called, and warehouses, from river to river.

The more fashionable streets being Chestnut, Walnut, and Broad Streets.

The capital of Pennsylvania is rich in beautiful buildings, the greater part of which are of marble, and decorated in a most artistic style. Not even the Fifth Avenue of New York, which is the pride of all Americans, can, to my taste, compete with some of the streets of Philadelphia. The palaces of the merchant princes of this city are truly gorgeous, and might well stand comparison with our very best European houses ; as, for instance, those of Mr George W. Childs, Mr Thomson, and Mr Thomas MacKellar, which might be taken for models of the most sumptuous, artistic, and splendid mansions.

The public buildings are also very beautiful. I may mention the Catholic Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul, which is considered the finest church in the United States. There are also other thirty-five Catholic churches in Philadelphia, while there are scarcely thirteen Quaker Meeting-houses left !

Thanks to the great kindness of Mr George W. Childs, the well-known and celebrated proprietor of the *Public Ledger*, which, by the by, is the paper which has the largest circulation in the world, I was able to see and admire, in all their particulars, the most interesting buildings and historical sites of this city.

I will particularly mention the Girard College,

a beautiful structure, copied from the Madeleine in Paris, it was built by Stephen Girard, a Frenchman who made an immense fortune in Philadelphia, and at his death bequeathed to the town an estate of forty-five acres and the sum of two million dollars, to be employed in erecting a college capable of accommodating three hundred poor orphan children. The present number of pupils amounts to five hundred and fifty ; five other buildings, also of marble, and built in the Grecian style to match the principal college, have been added for their accommodation.

The University of Pennsylvania is another beautiful building, of serpentine marble, in the Gothic style of architecture.

Indeed, Philadelphia is rich in colleges and public schools, and also in libraries, with which she has supplemented an admirable educational system.

While in that town I went to see the celebrated prison known as the Eastern Penitentiary, of which Charles Dickens gave such a sad and melancholy account. I even saw the man of whom he wrote : " I never saw such a picture of forlorn affliction and distress of mind. My heart bled for him ; and when the tears ran down his cheeks, and he took one of the visitors aside to ask, with his trembling hands nervously clutching at his coat to detain him, whether there was no hope of



his dismal sentence being commuted, the spectacle was really too painful to witness. I never saw or heard of any kind of misery that impressed me more than the wretchedness of this man."

And I found him to be a jolly, fresh-faced, happy-go-lucky German, who laughed in my face when I asked him if he had read Dickens' account of him in his "American Notes."

Considering that this man since that time (1842) has been set free, and put into the same prison as many as five consecutive times, and that the last time, when he once more took possession of his comfortable cell, he exclaimed, "Thank God I am at home once more!" considering that I heard from his own lips that he could not be happy outside those walls, I do not think he is much to be pitied.

It is true that the prisoners are separated, but not solitary; they see and converse with the prison inspectors, and even with their families and friends, and I think to be kept away from the other prisoners ought to be considered a blessing rather than a misfortune, for I am sure little good can be derived from such society, and no honest man could pine for it. Constant contact with the vicious can only conduce to vice. Each prisoner is furnished with enough work to keep him moderately busy, and is, besides, allowed to earn as much money as he can, by working for himself. The cells open on either side out of



long corridors, which all proceed from a centre room forming a star ; this room is the library for the prisoners, who are allowed to read as much as they like, and those who do not know how to read are taught to do so, it being one of the rules of the penitentiary ; so that, altogether, I do not think, as Dickens did, that "death would be preferable to such a life." Nor do I hold with the great writer, that "this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain is immeasurably worse than any torture of the body." On the contrary, I firmly believe it to be by far the most philosophic and humane chastisement that man can inflict, since, while it insures the prisoner from the continual contact and consequent contamination of vice, it provides time for reflection, and wholesome food for the mind, which is not left to prey upon itself. Of course it is always happier to be free, but then it is their own fault if they find themselves in a prison. Crime must be punished, otherwise society would soon come to an end. This was the first prison ever started on the solitary system, and I believe it has given the very best results. Its great advantage over other systems is, as I have indicated, that the convicts have leisure and opportunity for reflection, and for the formation of steady and correct habits ; and when set free are not in danger of meeting other prisoners who can identify them, and thus obtain a fearful power and influence

over them for wrong-doing, neither can they be contaminated by them during their confinement.

The same day, after visiting the Eastern Penitentiary, I went to see the Pennsylvania Insane Hospital, which is giving such good results under the able management of Dr Kirkbright; and this is, indeed, a sad and a melancholy place if you will, in spite of its beautiful marble halls, comfortable rooms, and stately gardens and park.

And yet perhaps, after all, those poor people are happier in their madness than we with all our boasted sense. I am sure sometimes I have wished I were mad, and could forget all that has happened for the last few months, to live once more in the happy past. Such were my thoughts as I paced that splendid mansion, which seems, indeed, the heaven of forgetfulness, and yet there is something very sad in a madhouse; and one cannot help asking oneself the unanswerable question, Why are these things so? Why should there be madness and idiocy?

In one of the rooms I saw an old-looking lady lying upon a sofa with her legs and feet resting on the arm of the couch, and her hair, which was white as snow—and, strange to say, most of them are grey-headed—hanging loosely over the back of the sofa. This poor woman, long past the prime of life, they told me had once been the belle of Philadelphia, and had gone mad when she lost her beauty. She had already been twenty years

in the establishment. Do all the vanities of this world end thus ?

But I must turn away from this sad subject.

The society of Philadelphia is generally acknowledged to be the best in the States, and the most agreeable. From the very first day of my arrival at the Continental Hotel—which, by the by, is the best I have been in as yet in America,—I received visits from many of the kind inhabitants, who seemed to take a real interest in me, and to feel a sympathy for my sadness. They have all been so good and so truly kind, that I could not let this occasion pass without recording my gratitude, and thanking them all from the bottom of my heart for the delicate attentions and friendly kindnesses I received from them, and which I fear it will never be in my power to return.

These kind and indefatigable friends arranged a delightful excursion for me to visit the Pennsylvania coal district, which we did, a large party of ladies and gentlemen all seated on three little separate engines, which followed each other at a short distance—the three always keeping in sight of one another, and looking very much like toy engines. They were gaily painted on the outside, and covered in with glass roofs and sides. I think I never experienced a more enjoyable sensation than whilst rushing over the country in this tiny vehicle, surrounded by gay and pleasant



companions, protected from the intense cold without by the comfort that reigned within the little glass abode. We were sitting on the engine itself, whose blazing fire kept us at a most comfortable temperature, although all without was a glorious scene of ice and snow; every tree was frosted, and nothing to be seen for leagues and leagues but that solemn snow-covered landscape; relieved by the dark pine-trees and forests of evergreen on the tops of some of the high mountains. Now and then we would come upon a long train—a line of cars they would call it here—humbly drawn up on one side of the road to allow our three little spinning engines to fly past unmolested; for the telegraph was kept at work incessantly during the two days of our most original excursion, to give warning of our approach, and convey the order from the Directors, who were of our party, to suspend all traffic on the line until we had rushed past. Suddenly would occur a deep bend on the line and a curve which would cause the first engine, our leader, to pass in a parallel line with us, as if retracing its steps many yards below us—that was a pretty sight, as we rushed wildly after each other through this ghostly-looking universe of snow! Then again we would come to an immense mountain, up whose perpendicular sides our fairy engines had to climb! And this feat of man's ingenuity and power was performed in less time



than it would take me to describe it, by stupendous machinery of pulleys and ropes that I have not genius enough to explain, but which drew forth the admiration of every practical man in our party.

The leagues and leagues of coal mines that we passed were perfectly bewildering. I can only say they left the impression on my mind that the startling report that was once raised in Europe of an approaching end of that necessary article of use and comfort, was most uncalled for—I should say this district alone could supply the world with coal. We found a handsome luncheon awaiting us at the best hotel in Reading, and a most sumptuous banquet by way of a dinner at Mount Carbon, the end of our first day's journey; with the best of wines, including the most expensive Johannisberg that the Prince of Metternich's celebrated vineyards ever produced; and the most exquisite ices ever invented by Parisian genius to tempt the fastidious taste of her spoilt children of fashion. On entering the dining-room the eye was not only struck with the brilliancy of the hundreds of wax lights reflected on the rich silver plate, but also enchanted with the luxurious profusion of freshly gathered flowers of every hue. Nothing can surpass the beauty and the profusion of these lovely flowers which are to be seen in the greatest abundance on every well appointed table in all the large cities of the Union; they all come from Boston, where they

are cultivated as an immense trade, and from whence they are sent all over the country. The packing of these fragile beauties appears to me as great a mystery, and as wonderful an art, as their cultivation in the midst of the intense cold that reigns on this eastern coast during their Arctic winters, for the whole country round is covered with several feet of snow ; the sleigh bells are sounding merrily in the air ; but instead of holly, Christmas berries, and mistletoe in their houses, these spoilt children are surrounded by lovely Boston rosebuds of every hue—and hot-house flowers of every variety of beauty too numerous to specify, and only to be obtained at an immense cost—50 or 100 dollars a hundred.

Comfortable bed-rooms were provided for all the merry party, who retired early to rest after listening to a few sweet songs from the lovely voice of the fair wife of Mr Childs, who assisted to do the honours of the table for Mr Gowan, the President of the Reading Railway, to whose princely hospitality we were indebted for this memorable, and most agreeable, entertaining, and instructive excursion of two days' duration.

Philadelphia abounds in manufactories of all descriptions, many of which I visited through the kind instrumentality of the various proprietors, acquiring fresh knowledge and information at every visit I paid ; for I found every one

anxious to explain and indefatigable in their endeavours to acquaint one with the processes of their various productions.

I must not omit to mention a most interesting visit I paid to the immense establishment of Mr Lippincott, the great publisher, whose vast premises, and endless galleries full of intelligent work-people, each and all engaged on the various processes of printing, lithographing, binding, gilding, and all the multifarious requirements needed to carry out the work of publishing the words and thoughts, that are by these means to spread far and wide over the land, afforded me one of the greatest pleasures I enjoyed in my rambles through Philadelphia. I was surprised to learn from Mr Lippincott that large quantities of the great placards of different announcements, and various theatrical and other entertainments that line our London streets, are printed in his vast establishment, and sent over to England by the hundred weight.

I believe had I stayed a month longer in Philadelphia, I should still have found much of interest to see and hear. Upon the whole, I spent a most agreeable time in this capital of the beautiful State of Pennsylvania, and if I was able anywhere to forget the heavy loss I had so recently sustained, it was certainly in this city, to whose kind inhabitants I am so much indebted ; they treated me with splendid hospitality, and



what is far more to the lonely traveller continually made me feel that I was surrounded by the true interest of friendship. The kind voices of Mr Childs and his charming accomplished wife will ever be associated in my mind, with the calm stately atmosphere of the Quaker City. The pleasant hours I have passed with them will never be forgotten. The princely hospitality of Mr and Mrs E. Thompson is, indeed, something to record in the history of my journey to America for not only was their magnificent mansion always open to me, but they provided me with their own private car for the different excursions I made by rail, excursions which, in the old country, could no longer be called by so unimportant a name, for some of them lasted for days and nights, during which I found every comfort and luxury—both of table and service—that the most fastidious taste could desire, provided for me by the forethought and attention of these kind and most hospitable friends. I shall certainly never forget Philadelphia, where I was fêted and treated more as a European Prince than as the humble, sad, and solitary wanderer I really felt myself to be. May all good blessings rest upon those kind friends ; and on thine too, my kind thoughtful young host of the Continental Hotel, whose hand was the last to press mine as I stepped into that princely private car, composed of drawing, dining, and bed-rooms, with rich



blue satin furniture and hangings. Farewell, good and kind Frank Henderson—I trust to welcome you all some day on my side of the broad Atlantic; till then, God bless you all for your kind reception of the lonely stranger to your beautiful city, to your marble halls, and above all, to your noble hearts!

## XI.

“ La science n'est pas matérialiste et ne peut servir l'erreur.

“ Il nous faut une croyance ; les esprits qui se vontent de n'en avoir aucune, sont les plus près de tomber dans la superstition, ou de s'évanouir dans l'indifférence.

“ Les doctrines à *priori* ont fait leur temps, et nous n'en voulons plus.

“ La science n'affirme rien, ne nie rien ; la science cherche.”

C. FLAMMARION.

AFTER this short but exceedingly agreeable sojourn in Philadelphia, I went once more to New York, where I found Lady Leigh and her uncle, Professor Farren, already installed in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, awaiting my arrival to take the first steamer for the Havana, as we had arranged before leaving Washington.

Professor Farren was a very clever man, of no small attainments. He was a profound scholar, and, for many years, had been professor at Cambridge, in New England. Unlike his niece, Lilian Leigh, he cared little for society, of which he knew nothing, and unlike her too, he loved philosophical speculations and those metaphysical dreams that I also delighted in.

His school of philosophy was, however, so different from mine, that we found it very difficult to

agree on scarcely any subject; so that to the great delight of Lady Leigh, who hated any serious conversation, we generally abstained from mentioning subjects on which we knew we could never come to an understanding.

One day, however, after listening to a long and detailed list of the merits of Sir George Leigh, which his widow thought fit to give us, I asked her why she did not try to communicate with him through a spirit-medium. I related the extraordinary manifestations I had witnessed at Dr Slade's, and my firm belief that all those phenomena really proceeded from some unseen and immaterial agency.

"I wonder," I said, "that you have never tried to communicate with the spirit of the husband you so loved on earth, and whose memory still seems so dear to you!"

"Oh! I do not believe in those things," she said. "Besides, I should be so frightened if a spirit were to appear before me; and then, too, my confessor would never forgive me."

"You are fit company for one another," interrupted the old professor, with a sneer. "You, Lilian, with your fear of priests and the confessional, and you, sir, with your low superstitions about spirit-manifestations and miracles. I should never have taken you for such a simpleton," he politely added, "as to believe in the possibility of anything happening contrary to the laws of nature."

“But I do not assert that anything ever happens contrary to the laws of nature. On the contrary, I see nothing in those laws which would prevent us believing in the possibility of such a thing.”

“Our ideas are very different on this point, Lord Carlton,” he said, after a few minutes. “To believe in the possibility of spirit-communication one must necessarily believe in a future state.”

“Is it possible, then, that you do not believe in the immortality of the soul?”

“I would believe in it,” he said, “most assuredly, if I believed in its existence at all; but as yet I have found nothing to prove to me its existence. I have indeed, read many, more or less probable speculations, trying to establish the truth of these worn-out and empty dreams which men in their unheard-of conceit, have tried to establish as a reality, but I have never seen anything worth even inquiring about.”

“But if you deny a man a soul, you cannot possibly deny him the power, which undoubtedly he possesses, of reasoning, thinking, remembering, &c., &c. How can you account for those phenomena, if you deny the existence of a mind, separate and distinct from the body?”

“You talk of things you do not understand. Those properties of which you speak only prove to me that matter possesses numerous and varied properties. Thinking is neither more nor less a



property of matter than digestion, only that one is the especial property of the brain and the other of the stomach."

"The brain I take to be the instrument of which the spirit makes use in the same way as a man makes use of a piano to produce music. The instrument would not, could not produce it if left to itself."

"Ah! that is what people who know nothing of the brain and its particular formation are always telling me; but if such is the case, tell me, how is it that when the brain is injured men lose their reason? I have known hundreds of such cases. The smallest pressure of a bone upon the brain will stop all thought, and even consciousness. What does that show, but that thought is but a property of that especial organ?"

"I cannot deny, sir, that the state of the body affects the mind and reason of a person; but you must remember that I do not assert that man possesses a soul separately and independently from his organisation, but, on the contrary, that I firmly believe this organisation to be the instrument through which the soul receives impressions. No wonder, therefore, that the imperfections of the instrument should render those impressions untrue, or that the total destruction of it should stop those impressions altogether."

"My dear uncle," said Lilian, all of a sudden, "I hope you are not going to enter now into a

never-ending discussion about all that rubbish of which you are both so fond. It is very rude, particularly before a lady. . . . I think we had better dine to-day at Delmonico's. So it is time to make our preparations."

This, of course, put a stop to our discussion; but before I left the room Professor Farren came up to me and said, "I am not sorry that my niece has checked our wild speculations in this way; for, my dear sir, I am like the old Alexandrian philosopher, 'sick of syllogisms, and probabilities, and *pros* and *cons*.' What do I care," he continued, "after all, if on weighing both sides, the nineteen pounds' weight of questionable arguments against, are overbalanced by the twenty pounds' weight of equally questionable arguments for? Do you not see that my belief in your victorious argument will be proportioned to the one over-balancing pound only, while the whole other nineteen will go for nothing?"

I laughed at this unexpected sally, but was obliged to answer. "You are right, sir, and I must confess that you are so, although I am really chagrined at it. But the more I see of the world, the more I am convinced that what men need, is not so much a more or less probable philosophy sustained by more or less convincing arguments, but a faith beyond all arguments and discussions; for what would be an unquestionable proof to me, need not therefore be equally so to

you. We do not want to possess a faith, we want a faith capable of possessing us."

And thus we parted, having gained little, as usual, from our discussion, excepting the disapproval of Lilian Leigh.

## XII.

*“Gerarda.* Todo se aprende hija y no hay cosa mas facil que engañar a los hombres, de lo que ellos tienen la culpa; porque como nos han privado del estudio de las ciencias en que pudieramos divertir nuestros ingenios sutiles, solo estudiamos una, que es la de engañarlos, y como no hay mas que un libro, todas lo sabemos de memoria.

*“Dorotea.* Nunca yo le he visto.

*“Gerarda.* Pues es excelente lectura y de famosos capitulos.

*“Dorotea.* Dime los titulos siquiera.

*“Gerarda.* De fingir amor al rico, y no disgustar al pobre. De desmayarse a su tiempo, y llorar sin causa. De dar celos al libre, y al colerico satisfacciones. De mirar dormido y reir con donaire. De estudiar vocablos y aprender bailes. . . . Y de no enamorarse por ningun acontecimiento, porque todo va perdido, sin otros muchos capitulos de menor importancia.”

\*LOPE DE VEGA.

THE tenth of December found us still in New York. For some reason or other we had not been able to get a steamer in which to proceed on our voyage to Cuba, and were still stopping at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in the great American metropolis.

We had been to the theatre to witness Miss Neilson's interpretation of Shakespeare's Juliet. The merits of this pleasing actress are too well known for it to be necessary that I should dwell upon them here; indeed, what could



I say that would add to her fame? She exercises such an absolute power over her audience that she makes the whole theatre shed tears of sympathy. It is impossible not to feel her gentle and graceful influence.

Lady Leigh could hardly control her feelings, she who generally possessed such power over herself, and even Professor Farren who particularly disliked theatres, was overcome by those tender scenes so life-like when represented by the beautiful Miss Neilson.

We had had a cold and windy sledge drive from the theatre—which fortunately is not very far from the hotel—and now behold us seated before a luxurious supper, in which the delicate dishes, terrapin, and canvass-back ducks, figured with a gumbo of oysters, and other American dainties, while iced champagne was ready to recruit the vital powers exhausted with the stifling heat of the theatre and the cold drive which had followed it.

Lady Leigh occupied a suite of apartments on the twenty-second street side of the hotel, and it was in one of these we were now sitting, alone, for the first time since our arrival in New York, for the old professor had retired to his club after the play.

We seemed to have brought with us, from the theatre, an atmosphere of poetry and passion. Shakespeare's burning words still vibrated in my ears, and I could have fancied that the glowing

sun of Italy had just set over fair Verona, and all the personages of the soul-stirring tragedy.

In such a mood of mind, with a lovely woman by my side, whose eyes told their tale of love only too plainly, will not the reader pardon me if the sweet pure image of Conchita paled for the first time before the overwhelming combination of glowing reality and glorious fiction? Alas! I found it so, and when Lilian's voice stole softly on my ear, it found a too ready echo in my heart.

"Lord Carlton," said she, a tear trembling in her blue eye, like the morning dew on a violet, "does not your heart bleed for those true lovers, and yet do you not feel that their short life of love was infinitely to be preferred to an eternity of loveless apathy? Is life worth having uncheered by affection, by —" a glance and a slight movement towards taking my hand in hers completed the sentence.

But the image of Conchita seemed to interpose between me and the delicate little hand extended hesitatingly towards me, and I answered in the calmest tones I could command,

"Love, beautiful Lilian, is, no doubt, the wine of life, its glory, and its crown of bliss; but once felt, it never can be renewed; we have both loved much, and we have both lost the object loved; does this not show you that love is never to be completely realised on this earth? We must therefore guard ourselves, in this world, where so

much is to be done, from allowing it to engross our thoughts, and enfeeble our characters, and —” I stopped short in the very middle of the rather *mal à propos* course of philosophical reflections into which I had been driven as a refuge from my own feelings ; by the tears which now fairly overflowed the eyes of my fair companion, and bedewed the roses on her lovely cheeks.

“ Oh !” cried she, “ how you must despise me, you so wise and strong—so far removed above all earthly weaknesses—whilst I—alas ! Oh ! Lord Carlton, I wish you would teach me to imitate you, to be cold and wise, to still the beatings of my heart, and to fear nothing on earth, but to do wrong ; and wish for nothing but the heaven beyond.”

Could anything be more calculated than this request to show me how ill-fitted I was to play the part of Mentor to so sweet a pupil ? She asked me to teach her calmness, while my own heart beat high, and my pulses throbbed with excitement, and I felt with Romeo that there was “ more peril in her eye than in twenty of their swords.”

Flight was impossible ; what excuse could I make for leaving her ? The temptation was too great, and her uncle might be detained at his club for hours to come. A pause ensued, fraught with danger for me ; at last she timidly placed her



hand on mine as if to attract my attention, and "Why do you not reply," she said in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "are you afraid to undertake so inapt a scholar?"

"No," cried I, almost driven from my defences; "but I fear that the pupil would become the master—the master the too willing slave. Oh, lovely Lilian!—" What more I should have said I know not, but certainly what I should have repented of in a more sober mood; but at that moment she seemed to fade from my view, as a heavy vapour filled the room, and interposed between me and her fair face. A strong odour of smoke at the same time was perceived.

"Good heavens! what is this?" cried I, starting up, and feeling as if awaking from a dream.

But she, much more engrossed by her feelings, did not seem to be aware of anything unusual, and keeping her hand on mine, "'Tis nothing," she said,—“nothing; smoke in the next room, perhaps. . . . Call me Lilian again; I like it. It seems as if you did really take some interest in me when you call me thus.”

But at that moment confused noises sounded in the passage, in which the fearful cry, "Fire!"—too often heard in America—predominated, and a man rushing into the room exclaimed,

*"The hotel is in flames."*



### XIII.

“Hört ihr's wimmern hoch vom Thurm?

Das ist Sturm!

Roth, wie Blut,

Ist der Himmel,

Das ist nicht des Tages Glut!

Welch' Getümmel

Straszen auf!

Dampf wallt auf!

Flackernd steigt die Feuersäule

Durch der Strasze lange Zeile

Wächst es fort mit Windeseile,

Kochend, wie aus Ofens Rachen,

Glüh'n die Lüfte, Balken krachen,

Pfosten sturzen, Fenster klirren,

Kinder gammern, Mütter uren,

Thiere wimmern

Unter Trümmern,

Alles rennet, rettet, flüchtet,

Taghell ist die Nacht gelichtet;

Durch der Hände lange Kette

Um die Wette

Fliegt der Eimer, hoch im Bogen

Spritzen Quellen Wasserwogen.

Heulend kommt der Sturm geflogen,

Der die Flamme brausend sucht.

Prasselnd in die dürre Frucht

Fällt sie, in des Speichers Räume,

In der Sparren dürre Bäume,

Und als wollte sie im Wehen

Mit sich fort der Erde Wucht

Reiszen in gewalt' ger Flucht,

Wächst sie in des Himmels Höhen

Riesengrosz !  
Hoffnungslos  
Weicht der Mensch der Götterstärke,  
Müszig sieht er seine Werke  
Und bewundernd untergehen."  
SCHILLER.

I RUSHED from the room, whilst Lilian, half-fainting, followed me, still holding by my arm.

The scene that met our eyes as we stepped into the corridor soon told us the dreadful truth. The hotel was in flames. Nobody knew how ; nobody seemed in that awful moment to think of anything but personal safety. The passages, generally deserted at that late hour of the night, were now crowded with half-dressed men and fainting ladies, all running to and fro in the wildest excitement.

Here a young mother was lifting her new-born babe over her head, as if to save him from the flames which she thought would devour him. A little farther a young lady, her face worn with recent suffering, her arms folded closely upon her breast, was carried by a man of middle age, probably her father. On the other side, two young lovers stood still against the wall, waiting in each other's arms, for the death which they thought inevitable ; whilst hither and thither, in every direction, little children were rushing wildly about, who, in the excitement of the moment, had been separated from their parents.

Thick clouds of smoke half-veiled the scene,

revealing here and there some touching incident of blank despair or devoted love.

The usurer pressing his gold to his heart,—the mother clasping her child, which she had but just aroused from its quiet sleep,—the servants of the hotel dragging the furniture about,—excited groups, too agitated to know what to do; such were the scenes which met our eyes as we stepped into the wide corridor outside our room.

Lilian, still grasping my arm, and white as death, stood motionless by my side. I looked at her in silence, not one trace of love or even of affection could I now see in her lovely face, which an instant before had been so idealised by that heavenly passion; nothing but selfish fear could now be traced upon her perfect features. I trembled as I made this observation. I trembled, but it was with pleasure; and my first impulse was to raise a prayer of thanksgiving that the fatal temptation was now at an end. Thank God, the fire had come to my rescue, for who knows what the next moment would have brought forth; but the fatal spell was now broken, and I felt safer amidst the flames than I had done an instant previously under the spell of her soft blue eyes.

As this feeling of relief passed through my mind, I fancied I felt the pressure of a cold lip against my burning brow. Could it have been my angel Conchita? But I had no time to reflect—the most urgent thing now was to save our

lives if possible ; surely the numerous staircases could not all have been burnt in such a short time ! Taking the half-fainting Lilian in my arms, I made ~~my~~ way as best I could through the dense crowd till I reached the head of the great marble staircase with my fair burden.

This was safe enough, but it was full of police, and firemen carrying hose and water-pipes. It seemed impossible that in so short a time all this commotion could have arisen ; the fire-engines were there already, and had been playing from almost the first moment upon the hotel, and to my astonishment the greatest order prevailed amongst the hotel servants and the firemen, who filled every corner of the hall and different staircases.

But even from this spot we could hear the cries of anguish from the people up-stairs, and from the more distant corridors.

Flames as yet there were none to be seen, but the smoke was very dense. I asked where the fire originated ; no one knew, but the thick volumes of smoke which surrounded us were proof enough of the terrible reality.

“I think we shall have time to save something,” I said to Lady Leigh.

“Oh, no,” she cried, pressing my arm convulsively, “Oh, no, save me—save me, I only want to live ; I care for nothing else but life—life ! Surely they won’t let us perish in this way !”



“Nonsense, Lady Leigh,” I said more bluntly than politely, “as yet the danger is not so great; you have jewels of value—we must save those at least—where are they?”

“In my room; but surely you won’t leave me alone here — Save me! save me! — Take me out of the hotel, and then do what you like with my jewels. Here are my keys — take them — save me, Lord Carlton, and then do what you will!” she exclaimed, as she put a bunch of keys into my hand.

Not one thought for me! Could she really love me when in this supreme hour she only thought of herself? I shuddered, and yet I was not displeased. It was a relief to know that I owed her nothing.

After some hesitation on her part, and much persuasion on mine, she decided to return to her apartments, and save something if possible.

There upon the table lay the supper untouched, just as we had left it. I made Lilian drink a glass of champagne, which revived her a little, and then we hastily proceeded to pack.

Professor Farren came into the room at that moment; he had heard in his club of the fire, and hastened as fast as he could to the hotel, which, however, he had had some difficulty in entering, as all the doors were guarded by the police.

He helped us to pack; one of the hotel

managers came kindly to tell us that we should have time to save everything if the wind would only remain in the same quarter.

Lady Leigh, who five minutes before wanted to fly and leave everything behind, was now for taking everything away with her. Her French maid was so terrified that she proved of very little use, but the Professor and I got some of her trunks, and began to throw everything in as fast as we possibly could, and I told my man to go and pack my things, so as not to lose any time.

"Oh dear me, what shall we do? — Oh, Lord Carlton, don't forget that dress—the blue dress just behind you—and my tulle dress in the other wardrobe. — Take care, uncle, you are treading on my favourite opera-cloak.—Oh! Lord Carlton, who would ever have thought that we should have come to this! I'll never go to an hotel again —if I am not burnt to cinders before I leave this."

And with these, and many other exclamations, the lovely widow, beautiful in her despair, threw her rich dresses on the ground one after another, while her maid, terrified out of her very senses, lay swooning in the arm-chair by the side of the fire-place.

Torrents of water now came pouring down from the ceiling, and added greatly to the general confusion.

Lady Leigh, more frightened than ever, was at

her wits' end to save her dresses from the pelting shower.

"Oh, uncle, just tell them not to play the engines over us—how disagreeable of them to throw so much water over people's rooms—oh my pink dress—my poor pink dress! it only came the day before yesterday from Paris—I shall go wild—" and the lovely widow threw herself on the sofa, dissolved in tears, whilst the water kept pouring down upon us in torrents.

The packing was finished at last, and with the greatest difficulty we managed to shut the trunks and carry them to the floor below.

Here the most ridiculous as well as the most dramatic scenes awaited us, for the most serious things in life have often their comic side. Here were the disconsolate managers looking most panic-struck; and women in the depths of despair, ringing their hands; there were young ladies half-dressed, who, in their hurry, had forgotten their chignons, and sundry other adornments, without which they presented the most laughable appearance. Half-dressed dandies, with their wigs the wrong side before, and middle-aged ladies without any wigs at all. But no one seemed to perceive all these things, for people only thought of themselves and their belongings at that moment.

In the midst of these scenes we remained for half-an-hour, waiting to learn the progress the



fire was making, or with what success the firemen were putting out the flames, before we made up our minds to rush into the cold street outside the hotel; but ready to fly at the slightest signal of real danger given by the men above.

The fire was raging at the top of the house in the servants' quarters, several of whom, it was whispered, had already perished in the flames; for unfortunately the staircase leading to their rooms had been burnt before they were even aware of the fire; and the windows opening on the roof of the hotel had strong iron gratings before them. This proved to be only too true—half the servant girls already reduced to cinders, lay in an undistinguishable heap on the upper floors—let us only hope that the smoke had suffocated before the flames had had time to reach and consume them.\*

The poor servants who had escaped—Irish girls the greater part—had come down into the hall and corridors, the only places that were considered safe, and this was the saddest sight of all. Nearly every one of those poor women had lost a sister, a daughter, or a friend, and even those who had been fortunate enough to escape, had lost their savings, their little all. Their despair may well be imagined. There they all crowded in numbers, with bare feet and wrapped in the blankets and sheets from their beds, the

\* Too true! alas!



only covering they had been able to save from the all-consuming flames. There they were, all close together, looking the very picture of misery and despair; and their cries were heard all over the place, making the sad scene still more terrible. I managed, after some time, to go upstairs to the very top of the house. Only one side of the great handsome building had been destroyed.

This was owing, no doubt, to the wind which fortunately kept all night in the same quarter, but more still to the wonders worked by the New York firemen, who, no doubt, are the best in the world. Their organisation as a body, their discipline, and their courage were indeed beyond all praise, as any one can testify who has witnessed a fire in the United States; and their engines and appliances are the best I have ever seen.

I helped them as well as I could to extinguish the last remains of the fire, whilst the Professor remained with Lady Leigh on the first floor of the hotel.

The whole night was passed in this way, and when at last day dawned, and the sun gilded the tops of the numerous spires of New York the next morning, it revealed to us all the horrors of the past night.

We had new rooms assigned to us in the hotel on twenty-third street side; for we thought it would be hard to abandon the poor hotel just

after its misfortunes, as the great majority of the inmates did ; but the horrors of that dreadful night were always before our eyes. It was impossible to forget those poor servant girls roasted alive in their very beds, and the cries of agony of their companions as they lay on the cold hall of the hotel, unable to realise all their misfortunes. We remained in the Fifth Avenue Hotel until we embarked in the first steamer which left for the Havana, and soon afterwards quitted New York and the United States for a more genial climate at this cold season of the year.

## XIV.

“Thou paragon of elemental powers,  
Mystery of waters—never slumbering sea!  
Impassioned orator, with lips sublime,  
Whose waves are arguments which prove a God!”

R. MONTGOMERY.

THE day for our departure arrived at last, and the American steamer “City of Havana” was awaiting us at the wharf near Castle Garden.

Of course there was a great deal of delay before we could leave the hotel. Lilian’s dresses not having been made, so to speak, with a view to travelling, her French maid was in a greater “fix” than ever, how to pack without squeezing and crumpling them, which, indeed, seemed a problem never to be solved. Professor Farren was very fidgetty and impatient, which did not make matters easier, as Lilian thought fit to go into hysterics, calling herself the most ill-treated of women, and the Professor the most hard-hearted of uncles.

But in spite of all these little misfortunes, we were out of the hotel at last, and the colossal trunks of the fair enslaver, who with their contents intended to conquer all the Havanese hearts,

were brought out with immense difficulty on account of their enormous proportions, and placed on the top of the carriage.

And this was the most extraordinary vehicle I have ever seen. It was a carriage—and yet no, it was an omnibus—no—*it was a carriage*, but what a carriage! I do not think that even that wondrous contrivance in which Richelieu used to travel during the latter years of his life, could have borne comparison with this vehicle. There was room inside for ten people; and yet to look at, it was only a square carriage like any other, in everything but size, and in this respect certainly it was different, for it actually seemed constructed for giants, half a dozen of whom could have sat comfortably in it, if such persons are comfortable, which I doubt; for I know how much I suffer with my comparatively small prison-house, so that I can easily imagine how much more they must have to endure with their colossal frames.

Outside this carriage were placed the trunks, one on the top of the other, until they literally reached the height of the first floor. When everything was ready, and Lilian had taken her place in the very remotest corner of the carriage still in a very bad humour, and the Professor had settled himself in another corner with his head right out of the window; I suppose to be as far from his niece as he possibly could, we started. The snow was coming down thick and fast, and the streets



were white with it—I mean black, for snow has the peculiar property, somehow or other, of becoming black as soon as it touches the pavement of a town. It was freezing hard, and the news-boys in Broadway were sliding to their heart's content, and to the annoyance of their natural enemies the policemen on either side, which of course made the pavement as slippery as it is possible for stones to be, which is a great deal too much at times ; and the ladies who were shopping in and out of the different stores, as I believe women were born to do, did nothing but slip, and slide, and drop their newly-purchased articles in the gutters, to the great delight of the little beggars and boot-blacks.

When we arrived at the wharf, we found the steamer just ready to start, and all the passengers on board ; and we were only too glad to take shelter in the cabin, leaving the luggage, and innumerable hand-bags and baskets, to the care of the servants, to the great disgust of the Professor, who of course predicted they would be all left behind—which prophecy, however, happily for us, was never fulfilled.

The state cabin was in great confusion, and the negro servants kept running to and fro as if they had suddenly been seized with a desire of being useful, and did not know how.

The passengers, of course, ran the first thing to take their places at the table, which seems to be

the principal and most important thing to do when you enter a steamer. Our places had been kept for us beforehand, beside the captain at the head of the table, where I was happy to see written on three little cards—Lady Leigh, Lord Carlton, and Professor Farren. As we had nothing particular to do, and the deck was impossible, on account of the snow and cold, and innumerable icicles which hung from the rigging like fanciful silver fringes, we sat down in our respective places before the long table. This was covered from one end to the other with bouquets and baskets of flowers, but flowers the most beautiful, and arranged as only Boston florists can arrange them, in the most fantastic of shapes, forming boats, steamers, light-houses, castles, &c., &c. As these expensive articles could not possibly belong to the captain, it was soon ascertained that they belonged to one of the passengers. I say *one*, because the same name was written on the card which accompanied each of them—and this name was—Miss de Fison.

In America it is the custom, when ladies are going on a sea-voyage, for the gentlemen of their acquaintance to send flowers and fruits to the steamers before starting; but this, of course, is only done to great belles, for no man would be so stupid as to send bouquets to old or ugly women, unless, indeed, these were great millionaires, or rich widows, which of course would alter the case.

We therefore arrived at the conclusion that this Miss de Fison must be the most beautiful and charming of young ladies, unless, indeed, she was a frightful old maid with a great fortune, from the far West, which was Lilian Leigh's opinion.

Sitting by my side at the table there was a very finely developed lady, who might easily have passed for a show-woman, if she had been dressed in short petticoats and tights, which, however, she was not; and three young ladies, her daughters, on the same scale as their mamma, who also looked in very good condition. They talked Spanish.

Opposite to us, and at the same table, there was a very thin, very tall, and very spare-looking old maid, with a little boy on either side of her, whom she certainly kept in the best order by giving them a thump now and then. Beside her sat another lady, who might have been of any age, and who looked very miserable indeed, just as if she had quite made up her mind to be ill all the voyage, and who I am sure was suffering already, in her imagination, from all the horrors of seasickness. There were also two gentlemen at the other end of the cabin, who looked very grave and solemn, and a lady, with four unruly children, who were as many as she could possibly manage on land, and who very soon began to get the better of her at sea. And I must not forget a stout old gentleman, who talked very loud, and a



younger one, in a gorgeous travelling suit, and another, who had put on at once the cool costume which he had thought necessary for the tropics, and did nothing but shiver and blow his hands, looking very foolish, indeed, in his white linen trowsers and large Panama hat.

These were our fellow-passengers,—at least those that were in the cabin at the time, for the great swells kept to themselves in their state cabins, and were, I suppose, engaged in beautifying for dinner. The rest were on deck, in spite of all the snow and the icicles, saying farewell to their friends on the pier.

Miss de Fison was, of course, the great topic of conversation, and I could see that she was not a favourite with the ladies ; none of whom, by-the-by, had yet seen her.

“ She must be a very fast young lady, indeed,” said one of the blooming daughters, in Spanish, which she thought no one could understand.

“ It is my opinion,” said the mamma, “ that she has sent all these flowers herself to call attention to her.”

All the three daughters seemed quite to coincide with this opinion, and remained silent once more.

As we did not know each other no one dared to speak, and an oppressive silence reigned, which made every whispered word audible throughout the cabin, and consequently turned all the faces to the speaker, who invariably turned red, and



suddenly forgot all that he was going to say. This state of things did not lead to much sociability, and Lilian, who was sitting by me, said in my ear, that "they were all very stupid, and a very second-class set of people, if one might judge from their appearance."

Suddenly the lady opposite to me, the one who had made up her mind to be sea-sick, called one of the stewards, which, of course, attracted the attention of all the passengers, and for the moment she became the great centre of attraction.

"Waiter," she said, in a very shrill tone, and speaking through her nose, "take away those flowers, if you please, or I guess they'll make me sick right away."

If a thunderbolt had suddenly dropped on deck a greater surprise could not have been produced than by those words. There was something so dreadful in the alternative, that even the black steward began to fear the consequences if he failed to obey the command. Yet he stood motionless in the middle of the cabin, exhibiting his beautiful double row of teeth in dumb astonishment.

"Do you hear?" said the delicate lady, seeing that her first order had not been obeyed. "Do you hear? Oh take them right away do, or I calculate—"

The poor steward did not wait to hear what she calculated, taking it for granted that it must be something very dreadful, but forthwith began

to clear the table. A gentleman now came up and inquired why he was taking away his daughter's flowers, which, of course, made him at once the object of general attention, and we all fixed our eyes on Mr de Fison, who was a portly gentleman who seemed to have started out of the cabin floor when his daughter's flowers began to be removed, for we had never seen him before.

"If you please," he said, "leave them alone ; or Miss de Fison will be very angry."

The steward trembled when he heard this, it was said in such a commanding tone, and all the passengers were impressed from that moment with Miss de Fison's importance, who, I am sure, they all took to be a perfect ogress, whose displeasure would be fatal to the ship's safety. And the old maid, with the little boys, fixed her green spectacles upon the worthy father of this terrible lady, and never removed her gaze until he was out of the cabin.

The delicate lady now began again. "Take all these flowers away—take them away or I'll be ill.—Jonathan, she said," calling the stout gentleman, at the other end of the cabin, who now approached us, "Jonathan, tell this fellow to take those nasty flowers away—you know I can't bear them—they come from Boston," she added, as if this was the very worst thing she could possibly say of them. "They come from Boston !"

The stout gentleman seemed to be struck with this terrible truth, and called back the bewildered steward, who was sneaking away.

“Take all these things away, sir; why don’t you do what the lady tells you.—Damme, sir, you’ll take them all away, right away, or—”

The poor man began once more to remove the flowers to another table, but he was stopped by the captain, who looked very indignant when he was told what had happened, and ordered the negro to bring all the flowers back again to their places. A great discussion now arose between the stout gentleman and the captain, which ended in the delicate lady taking her husband’s arm, and ascending to the deck, where they remained all the rest of the day, bravely encountering the snow and the wind which was now worse than ever, rather than to inhale the delicate perfume of the Boston rosebuds.

This, of course, settled the position of the De Fisons on board, everybody being now quite convinced of their importance, and even the Spanish family changed their minds about them, and the genuineness of their bouquets.

I was, of course, very anxious to see the great belle, but my wishes were not so easily to be gratified. Dinner came, just when we were starting, and was a very long affair, but at which Miss de Fison did not make her appearance.

The captain was called several times from

table, the ice being very thick in the bay, and the steamer obliged to cut her way through it to get out into the open sea. Grapes and champagne were sent, with compliments, from some of the passengers to Miss de Fison, who had a cabin on deck. Towards desert, the maid of this young lady made her appearance, and told one of the gentlemen, with her mistress's compliments, that she wanted some cheese salad, having been told it was the best thing for sea sickness.

The salad was instantly put in hand, and a wonderful dish it proved to be, a mixture of all imaginable condiments, and the last thing I should have recommended for sea-sickness ; but when it was finished, the maid took it up, and after a few minutes, again made her appearance, but this time with a beautiful Boston bud, which she presented to the gentleman who had made the salad. This special mark of favour seemed to make all the other men jealous, for they looked at him very savagely, and began forthwith to make strange dishes for the young beauty, which were afterwards sent up to her with each gentleman's compliments.

Mr de Fison did not seem to take much part in all these proceedings, but ate his dinner, talking only to the captain, and this at rare intervals. Lady Leigh was more cross now than before, and did not at all think it right that so much attention



should be paid to this Miss de Fison when she was there ; and the Spanish lady turned her head in disgust, whenever that young lady's name was mentioned, which was pretty often, I must confess, and gazed at the three daughters before her, who were such perfect specimens of feminine health and beauty.

Strange to say I found myself enjoying all this in spite of myself. How different it all seemed to me from my last sea voyage, when I could think of nothing but my misfortunes, and felt as lonely as if I had been in Sahara's desert, in the midst of nearly a thousand fellow passengers !

But in this little steamer I no longer felt lonely, and I found myself, to my great astonishment, not only taking an interest in what was going on, but actually amused by it ; and that evening I dreamt of Miss de Fison surrounded by her boats and castles of Boston roses, as I slept in the cabin next to that invisible belle.

The next two days were very windy and rough, and it snowed all the time ; until at last, on the second night, we passed Cape Hatteras, the end, but also the climax of all our troubles.

Miss de Fison had not made her appearance yet, but some of the more fortunate passengers had been favoured with an occasional sight of her, for she condescended to receive a few in her cabin, the passage in front of which, was in consequence, day and night, crowded with gentle-

men, anxiously awaiting a summons from the fair enslaver.

In the meantime I had made friends with Mr de Fison, whom I found to be a very congenial, generous, and convivial person, and a great favourite on board. Whether his daughter had anything to do with his popularity, I could not tell, but I could not help thinking, sometimes, that if he had been alone, he would not have been half so much sought after, notwithstanding his amiability. And he was very amiable indeed, and sent his champagne round the table, and grapes to the ladies, of which species of fruit, by the by, he seemed to have brought a perfect cargo.

Lady Leigh also got a great deal of attention paid to her, but it was only by those unfavoured men who could get no invitation to Miss de Fison's state cabin.

Ever since we left New York we had been racing with another steamer, the "City of New Orleans," which was bound for that port; and I even believe that there was a heavy bet put on the winner by the respective companies, so that we seemed to fly over the water after that ship which had left the mouth of the Hudson only about one hour before us.

When once we had passed Cape Hatteras, and there seemed to be a prospect of good weather, the race became very exciting indeed. Every

one on board took the greatest interest in it, and our funnel was red-hot with the tremendous pressure of steam on the boiler below. The excitement was so great, that even Miss de Fison came on deck to look after the rival steamer, which still kept ahead of us. And thus we were at last gratified with a sight of that young lady.

And she really deserved to be a great belle. She was dark, and had the most magnificent eyes I think I have ever seen, veiled by long drooping eyelashes, through which they sparkled like black diamonds. Her hair, which she then wore hanging down its full length, was very long and glossy, and of a dark brown. As it waved about her, carried here and there by the wind, it looked very charming. Her dress was most beautiful and costly, and I am sure three weeks had not elapsed since it had left the Rue de la Paix. She was very fascinating indeed altogether, and would have been perfection, if for one moment she could have forgotten her personal charms ; but, as she sat on deck, stretched out in a large arm-chair, covered with furs, and surrounded by admirers, she positively gave one the idea that to her mind there was nothing worth looking at in this world except a looking-glass.

The race was now becoming very close indeed. We were certainly gaining ground—I mean water—and the “City of New Orleans” was plainly visible to all of us as a dark object on the

horizon, amidst the red and gold splendours of that night's sunset.

The "Sombrero" lighthouse was now in sight, and this must be the decisive point of our long race, for here our rival was going to change her course, so as to steer for the Bay of Mexico, where lay the city of her destination. The object of our captain was to cross her bows, and make her go astern of us to the right, while we were proceeding forward to the left.

Night came on, and brought her uncertain shades and mysterious voices. No one left the deck ; and all eyes were fixed upon the ship before us, which was going full speed across the dim reflection which the clouded moon now and then made upon the tranquil waters.

Lilian was with her uncle on the prow, where almost all the other passengers were also collected, excepting the delicate lady, who was in her cabin very sick indeed ; I suppose, on account of the Boston flowers, from whose effects she had never recovered, for the sea was calm enough, and Miss de Fison, who had retired to the poop, thinking there would be less danger there of new attacks from her numerous admirers, and that she would be able to enjoy their society in peace and one of them at a time.

And yet there was nothing wrong in this, and no one on board, except of course, Lady Leigh, thought the worse of her for it. It was



simply the American fashion, and no American could possibly see any harm in it. In Europe people think that when one flirts with a young lady one must necessarily be in love with her; but what we find the least of in flirtation is love. Woman by nature is a flirt, but her flirting changes both in the mode and in the object, according to the country in which she has been brought up; and, as Lord Byron says,

“There are some, they say, who have had none;  
But those who have ne’er end with only one.”

No one must therefore accuse the young American ladies of being inconstant and flighty, for, you may be sure the English would do the very same if they had a chance.

But all this time we are gaining, *pretty considerably*, as the Yankies said, on the “City of New Orleans.” Our speed increases every moment, and some of the passengers begin to get frightened. The funnel gets redder and redder, and the greatest excitement prevails amongst the sailors. We reach the Sombrero buoy, whose red light warns us of approaching danger, and we get closer and closer to our rival. We can now see the people on her deck, who appear quite as excited as we are, and some even shout to us. We are close to them, so close that another turn of the screw, one would think, would make us touch, and yet we do not slacken our pace. Full speed we cut through the waves, and the wake of the

two ships is lost in one wide stream, in which sparkle the agitated waves with their thousand phosphorescent lights.

The "City of New Orleans" is gaining now, and seems as if she would run right against us, yet we do not give up, and flash full speed right across her bows! We all begin to feel uneasy at this moment. Lady Leigh has left her uncle, and comes as near to me as she can. The large Spanish lady, with the blooming daughters, who have defied seasickness and all the other dangers of the deep, give every now and then little screams of alarm; we turn so rapidly that the deck is all on one side, and it is with the greatest difficulty that we can keep our legs upon it; indeed one of the little boys tumbles down, and the thin old maid, who has gone to pick him up, rolls over and over until she reaches the bulwarks.

Professor Farren goes to the captain and asks him, with a very serious face, whether it would not be advisable to pack up one's things to be ready for any emergency.

The truth is that our vessel is of wood, and the "City of New Orleans" is of iron, so that if she were to run into us, which now seemed to us our inevitable destiny, we would certainly have the worst of it.

Miss de Fison now approaches our group and looks anxiously at the dark sea before us, but does not leave off flirting for a moment, and says she

can swim as well as anybody; to the great dismay of the young gentlemen, some of whom would have thought themselves happy for life if they could have saved her in their arms from a horrible death.

But this was not to be the case, for, Hurrah! we are past! we have won the race! Hurrah! the "City of New Orleans" is obliged to go astern of us, and turn once more round the buoy before continuing her westward course.

A cry of joy and exultation rises on the midnight air from all the passengers, and a rocket flies high over our heads in sign of triumph, after which we all retire in silence to our cabins; except Miss de Fison, who could not thus cruelly and deliberately break half a dozen manly hearts, and therefore remains an hour or two longer walking up and down with the young gentleman in white linen trowsers and large Panama hat, whom it is to be hoped is kept warm by love in spite of his tropical costume.

## XV.

“ We left behind the painted buoy,  
That tossed at the harbour mouth ;  
And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
As fast we fled to the South.  
How fresh was every sight and sound  
On open main or winding shore !  
We knew the merry world was round,  
And we might sail for evermore.

“ Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail ;  
The lady’s head upon the prow  
Caught the shrill salt, and sheered the gale.  
The broad seas swelled to meet the keel,  
And swept behind ; so swift the run  
We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
We seem’d to sail into the sun.”

TENNYSON.

THE next morning we had left the coast of Florida and the Sombrero lighthouse far behind, and were speeding along with all sails set. Our bright expectations of soon seeing the glorious land we were nearing, had quite driven from our minds the excitement of the previous night.

We had been obliged to break through the ice only three days before, in order to leave New York harbour, and now we were steering our



vessel through the ever warm waters of the Gulf Stream, which constantly brought to our side the green sea weeds of the bay of Mexico. How Columbus must have welcomed these poor but cheering specimens of tropical vegetation, which first announced to him the proximity of the new world he sought, and which seemed to give him the first greeting to the land he was so soon destined to discover!

The very air seems to bring new life to our being; the soft voluptuous breeze of the tropics blows gently over our heads, wafting us through the waters of the Gulf Stream towards that land of promise—the Pearl of the Antilles.

The sun, the stars, the moon, seem to have increased in size; the ethereal vault of heaven seems deeper, grander, more diaphanous, more splendid; one can even appreciate in this clear atmosphere the distance which separates one heavenly body from another. The bright transparent clouds seem to hang as awnings over our heads, thus preserving us from the scorching rays of an ever-burning sun, but which, however, shines through them, adorning them with the vivid colours of the rainbow. The sky above our heads appears as a vault of pellucid sapphire seen through a veil of golden gauze, while the sea below us shines as millions of emeralds as we seem to fly over these dazzling waters.

At night the pure bright moon of the tropics

smiles in all her splendour over the immense plains of Florida, which she reflects upon the tranquil waves as upon a mirror of Venetian glass. As we lean over the vessel's stern watching the ship's wake, sparkling with the phosphorescent lights, one feels the strongest desire to plunge into the ever-shining waves, and become a part of that luminous whole.

That morning Dr Farren and I were leaning over the stern, watching the indefatigable sharks, as they sported with the waves in their race alongside the vessel through the green waters, and amusing ourselves by throwing them biscuits, which they instantly devoured with all the avidity of wild beasts.

"What short work they would make of us if we were unfortunate enough to fall overboard!" I remarked, as an enormous fellow a little swifter than the others swallowed a large piece of bread I had just thrown amongst them.

"You may well say so, Lord Carlton," answered the learned professor; "those sharks are the most voracious creatures known, and the most dreaded enemies of the sailor. You were suggesting the possibility of being eaten by one of them, which I must say is not so very unlikely; but if such were to be our fate, what would become of the soul you suppose we possess? In less than an hour we would have become part of the shark's body. Surely this fact

puts at once an end to your extravagant theory concerning the immortal spirit which you say dwells in man !”

“I cannot say that I see your argument. It is true that our bodies, or rather the particles of matter of which they are composed, would go to form parts of the shark’s organisation, but our individuality can never be united to that of another animal.”

“Your argument only strengthens my theory. I do not pretend that the man’s individuality is united to that of the shark, as you express it, for I take it that this individuality ceases at the moment of death. A man is a certain quantity of material atoms put together for a certain time and for a certain purpose. When the atoms are divided, and the organisation disorganised, life must necessarily cease, and with it the man’s individuality.”

“I cannot understand,” I answered, “how any one can possibly believe that there is nothing in man but a certain quantity of material atoms formed into an organisation which, once made, is able to work quite by itself until, for some reason or other, something happens which stops the working of the machine, thus putting an end to the body and the individual at the same time. I remember, doctor,” I said, after a while, “that the other day, talking of the existence of a Creator, you said that you had been into man with your



scalpel and your microscope, and that you had found no soul in him. Can it be possible that you do not believe we possess a soul at all ?”

“ I should like to know,” he said, “ first of all, what you call a soul.”

“ I call a man’s soul his spirit, his inner self, his mind—that immaterial part of our nature that thinks. Surely it is impossible to speak of ideas as of material objects ? Therefore what produces them I hold to be spiritual, this I call the soul of a man.”

“ In this I do not agree with you ; what you call soul is only—as I have often told you—the peculiar property of the matter which forms the brain, on which it is entirely dependent, and from which it alone proceeds. The mind is dependent on the state of the brain, the same as life is dependent on the state of the body. What you hold to be the spirit of the man must therefore proceed from, and depend entirely on, his material structure.”

“ Physiologists tell us, however,” I suggested, “ that our bodies are perpetually undergoing changes, and that at least every seven years we possess quite a new body ; then, how can it be that we are able to remember events that we witnessed several years previously, as if they had occurred but yesterday ? If there be no spiritual soul, how can we retain impressions which were stamped upon mere matter, which is constantly



changing, the matter which *formed our minds*, and which may now, very likely, form part of some one else's mind? Is it possible to explain this fact by your materialistic theory? To do so, it is necessary to suppose that the old matter, which originally received the impressions, re-stamped those upon the new; and that this process was repeated every time the molecules of matter were changed; that is to say, twelve or fifteen times in a life time. But this could not be done, and we remain unconscious of the process. Surely this is harder to believe than is the theory, that memory is a result of the action of a spiritual element in our nature, which remains essentially the same during its connection with the physical body, the particles of which are constantly changing.

“To this theory you object, that the body is essential to the mind, without which it could not exist. Surely this is not a reason against it! The body can be essential to the spirit, and yet it need not be the spirit itself. Without the eye there could be no sensation of vision, and without the brain there could be no recollection of ideas; but neither the optic nerve nor the brain can be considered as the perceptive principle, for they are only the instruments of a superior power.

“Besides, the brain is not so essential to the powers of thinking and memory as we usually

suppose. People have been known to live in perfect health, and retaining all their faculties with only one half of their brain left to them. According to your theory, doctor, it will follow that if one part of the brain were missing, the thinking powers of the individual would of course be diminished. But you must be aware that this is not the case, at least not always. You may call such cases exceptional, but they are enough to establish the fact, that the brain is not so essential as we are apt to suppose. If a man can retain all his thinking and remembering powers after losing the half of his brain, can these proceed entirely from that organ? You must agree, doctor, that there must exist something in man which produces ideas, and which is able to retain the memory of events, infinitely superior to the mere material instrument to which you attribute them.

“Just suppose for one moment that a savage were to see, for the first time in his life, a large steam-engine stop on account of the stoppage of one of its wheels, he would at once believe that the motive power was in that wheel—he could not guess that it depended more closely on the steam, and ultimately on the fire which produces it. The philosopher sees the fire which produces the steam, but I fear both philosopher and savage are equally ignorant of the *divine fire* which produces life.”

I could see that my philosopher, if not quite convinced by my argument, was at least beginning to think about it, weighing it in his mind, as he would have expressed it, against his preconceived opinions on the subject.

“And where do you suppose that this sacred fire, as you call it, dwells?” he inquired at last with a cynical smile, as he threw a large captain’s biscuit at our old friend the big porpoise, who made a grab at it. “In the brain you will say, of course, following Galen’s theory; but in what part of it, in the white globules of matter, or in the grey ones? I guess you cannot tell me, no more can any one for that matter.”

“You will laugh at me, doctor, I am sure—for, as our valued friend Professor Agassiz said, ‘Whenever a new and startling truth is brought to light in science, the world first says, It is not true. Afterwards, It is against religion. And at last it ends by saying, Everybody knew it a long time ago.’ But I have a new theory on that subject, which perhaps may prove a startling truth if properly demonstrated.”

“Oh, let’s have it by all means; only I do not promise you to believe in it all at once, and most likely I shall do as the world does, condemn it directly I hear it.”

“And then say it is against religion! Condemn it! I know you will, Doctor,” I answered him, laughing; “for I know that is just what



you have made up your mind to do. Ah! you men of science are all alike; you take years to believe in a thing, and not one minute to condemn it. You forget the real mission of science, which is to inquire and not to give opinions at random as to the truth or falsehood of things you know nothing about. My dear friend, *la science n'affirme rien, ne nie rien; la science cherche*. But to come back to my new theory, which, by the by, for aught I know, may be as old as the hills, I will just express it in as few words as I possibly can:—

“You know, Doctor, that philosophers have, ever since the time of Plato, been trying to solve the great problem of the true seat of the soul; some, as you have just said, following Galen’s theory, believe the brain to be the spirit’s home. Others, amongst whom we may place Harvey, the immortal discoverer of the circulation of the blood, have supposed the blood to be the seat of the soul; while others have inferred that the heart must be where the spirit dwells.

“All these theories have certainly a strong foundation, but would it not be much more philosophical to believe that the soul dwells in every part of the material organisation alike?”

“Is that your new theory?” exclaimed the Professor, with a laugh. “I cannot say it is a very original one, my dear friend, for even I myself, of all people, have thought about it; but



I should like to hear what reasons you give for it, and upon what extraordinary facts you base it."

"They are extraordinary facts, indeed, although not at all uncommon. You know, Doctor, that people, when they have suffered amputation of a limb, still feel the sensation of possessing it, and even cold and heat seem to act upon the limb that in reality lies mouldering in a distant church-yard. I knew a man who had his arm cut off above the elbow; still he always felt that he possessed both hand and arm, although these had been removed and buried years before. He swore he could hold his arm up and feel the motion the same as he had always done; and if he put the stump against the wall, he said he could feel his arm in the other room.

"I know of several similar cases, which to me are proof positive that the spirit and the body are of the same shape. I will only tell you of one that Ségur, in his famous history of the great army, has recorded. The great historian tells us that amongst the wounded, after the battle of Moskowa—or Borodino, as some call it—there was one, the most mutilated, for he only had left him his body and one arm. He, however, appeared so animated, so hopeful, and even so gay, that the surgeons undertook to save him, if possible. As they were carrying him, they remarked that he complained of pain in the limbs he no longer possessed. To this Ségur adds:—

‘This is a common case with mutilated people, and appears to me to be a new proof that the soul-body remains entire, and that feeling belongs to it alone, and not to the body, which is as unable to feel as to think.’\*

“Don’t you consider this enough proof that there exists a spiritual as well as a material body in man—a material organisation and an inner soul that remains unchanged even after the destruction of the material body with which it was clothed? A part of the material man may be removed by amputation, but the spiritual man still remains the same. Thus it is that a man can feel his limbs, though their material envelope be removed. You will remember that St Paul said to the Corinthians, ‘*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*’”

“You forget, Lord Carlton,” said the Professor, as we walked up and down the deck, “that that extraordinary feeling after amputation of which you speak has been attributed to, and almost proved to be the result of, the sympathy which still exists in the nerves with the limb.”

“I know that such has been the opinion of a great many surgeons, but this theory, like mine, still remains to be proved, and you must bear in mind that I deny nothing, and I assert nothing; I only speculate, and seek for truth. I am ready to adopt any doctrines which I think true, but

\* Ségur’s “*Histoire de la Grande Armée*,” Livre VII., chapitre xii.

until I have proved them beyond doubt to be so, I'll stand up for my theories and opinions."

"But I have not yet exposed all my thesis, Doctor," I continued, relighting my cigar. "I take man to be composed of three elements—a *spiritual soul*, clothed in a *material organisation* made up of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, &c., &c., which are put in communication with each other by means of *force*, a third element, which includes all the numerous forms of motion, to which we give the name of life."

"How do you make that out?" exclaimed the professor.

"Very easily, indeed, as you will see. Dubois Raymond discovered that 'the muscles and nerves, including the brain and spinal cord, are endowed during life with an electro-motive power, which acts according to a definite law.' Since then galvanic batteries have been formed by placing a certain number of slices of muscle, taken recently from the body of a man in the form of a pile, and such a battery has been found to act upon galvanic instruments, from these and other facts I have concluded that what we call life is neither more nor less than electricity."

"Electricity!"

"Yes, and why not?"

"Because I know the body of man as I know the palm of my hand; because I have dis-



sected hundreds, and have never found that electric fluid of which you speak."

"That is because you have only dissected dead matter, in which, of course, it no longer exists. The wires are still there, but the electric spark which animated the body, putting in motion its various parts, has ceased to flow. Nerves are not electricity any more than are telegraph wires. The latter, as the former, are only the medium through which electricity passes.

"But I must not speak of this great theory without mentioning its discoverer, my friend, Professor Elizabeth French, of Philadelphia, who, in her interesting and scientific book, entitled, 'A New Path in Electrical Therapeutics,' gives the following explanation, if I remember rightly, of her doctrine:—

" 'I would liken the human organism not to a magnet, which has been often done, but to a great natural battery, of which the lungs are the magnets, generating the electricity for the whole organism; the nerves, the wires or conductors; the heart, the helix or intensifying factor; the head and feet answering to the positive and negative poles. Conceive that the lungs generate the fluid from the oxygen of the atmosphere, and we have at once a never-failing electric reservoir, in which the slightest perturbation in the current produces, as is well known, a corresponding disturbance in the electric condition of the body.' "



"Your friend must be a clever woman. I have often heard of her as the discoverer of the cranial diagnosis, but I have never read any of her works."

"I think, doctor, that if you knew all the pros and cons of this thesis, you would at once accept it as a truth, and only wonder that you never thought of it before. Let me however tell you, that I do not believe electricity to be the generator of life,—the *will*-principle of the mind. It is merely the messenger, so to speak, which carries the telegraphic messages of the mind, and brings back to it the obedient response of the muscles. For the cerebro-spinal nerves, with their dual functions of motion and sensation, provoke the muscles to act, and report faithfully back to the brain the sensation which all such actions have produced.

"The magnetic force, that thus binds matter and spirit together, putting the soul in direct communication with the body, I should be inclined to call the vital principle of man.

"Now, Doctor, tell me frankly, what do you think of my new theory?"

Professor Farren was just going to present me with his objections to it, when a voice from the bridge over our heads sang out,

"Cuba is in sight."

## XVI.

“ Es la tierra mas hermosa que jamas vieron mis ojos.”

—CRISTOBAL COLON.

THIS, of course, put an end at once to our interesting discussion, for we all rushed to the prow of the vessel to get a first glimpse of the mountains of the beautiful and *siempre fiel* island as they rose above the horizon before us.

Even Lilian Leigh came out of her cabin, in spite of the early hour, to contemplate the beautiful sight; and Miss de Fison forgot for one moment her numerous admirers.

A strong morning breeze wafted us towards the land swiftly and yet smoothly. As the vessel bent under the weight of canvas, we actually seemed to glide over the blue waters, here and there gilded by the rays of the bright morning sun, which shone dazzlingly upon the thousand sails of the innumerable boats we met as we approached that land of promise.

Cuba is now in full sight. Its hills stand out boldly against the azure sky, the Pan de Matanzas, the highest mountain of the island, rising above them all, whilst thousands of tall palm-trees, ever graceful and ever green, cover their sides.

The crystal-like waters dash in gentle waves against the golden sand of the coast, on which we can just see in the distance the town of Matanzas reposing voluptuously by the sea-side upon a bed of eternal verdure.

We seem drawn towards the land by some unseen but irresistible power, as the magnet is to the pole. We advance rapidly. All the passengers—even those who have not made their appearance before—are now grouped on deck in summer costumes, for the tropical sun is hot even in the month of January.

But there is no time to make any *personal* observations : the castle of the Fuerza Vieja rises in all its grandeur before us.

This strong citadel was built by Don Fernando de Soto in 1544 ;—but we have passed it already. And now the Morro itself, the strongest fortress of all, presents itself before us.

The elegant and graceful lighthouse stands upon the grim walls that rise from the very waters below to a considerable height, whilst the whole is crowned by the Spanish flag.

Five years have passed since I last saw that gold and crimson banner floating over the Alcazar at Seville. Since then, how many scenes have I witnessed !—how much have I learned and suffered ! The bride whom I there wooed and won, after making me for two years the happiest of men, has flown to her original country

beyond the skies, where no flags are needed, and from whence I cannot fetch her back, travel as I will. All these sad thoughts passed through my mind as I contemplated those victorious stripes of gold and crimson which once ruled supreme on this side of the ocean, and upon which the sun never sets.

We fire a salute to the still proud banner, the noise of which brings me back to the beautiful reality before me, and my dreams of past happiness vanish from my mind for the moment, as the smoke of the gunpowder disappears from the glorious blue sky.

We turn to the right, close to the walls of the Morro castle, at the foot of which the waves dash in spray as we pass.

And now, what a glorious panorama opens out before us! the outskirts of the Havana surrounded by their laurel groves and forests of palm-trees, whilst the aroma of a thousand tropical flowers is wafted to us by the fresh morning breeze.

The numerous country houses, with their marble colonnades and orange-trees, take now the place of the grim old castles; and in the distance the outlines of the blue mountains are painted upon the intensely blue and peaceful sky.

On the other side of us is the Punta, another strong fort, and the last; for we now enter the famous bay, and amongst ships of every nation,



the numerous masts of which seem to fill the air, we discover the walls of the city, inside of which tower up one above the other the roofs of a thousand houses, and the towers of innumerable churches and convents.

Still we proceed swiftly, gliding as well as we can through the forests of masts. The enormous prison of Tacon—the most conspicuous building we have yet discerned—stands just in front of us, surrounded by forests of orange and laurel trees.

On the other side of the wide bay the hills of the Cabañas, surmounted by the fortifications of the same name, rise abruptly over the suburbs of Casa Blanca and Regla, famous for their enormous warehouses and tobacco manufactories.

But who can describe the beauties of this wondrous bay! Who can take in at a glance all the lovely details of this enchanting picture!

We are at anchor at last; but we cannot land until the *Junta de Sanidad* (the sanitary officers) make their appearance; so we have time to gaze once more on the quaint foreign looking city before us.

Thick walls of solid stone encircle it, over which are planted shady walks of Indian laurel trees, green now in the middle of winter, as in the hottest of summer months. Under their invitingly cool shade, specimens of the numerous and mixed population of Havana are grouped, enjoying the fresh air of the morning.

Slaves just come from the distant shores of Africa—Free Americans from the nearer United States—Chinamen with their pig-tails and yellow faces—Cuban belles in white muslin dresses, with only a flower in their glossy locks for their entire out-of-door head dress—Dandies in white linen trowsers, black coats, and huge Panama hats—Negresses in low dresses and short sleeves, carrying snow-white babies in their black arms, and strongly resembling those figures of ebony and ivory we sometimes see,—such is the crowd which is grouped under the Indian laurel trees in the Cortina de Valdes.

The numerous houses which overlook this promenade will give us a very fair idea of Creole architecture; the low arches underneath, the small entre-sol with the little balconies, and the large floor above, with its enormous windows and verandahs.

The balconies are all open, we can see into the innermost room of every house; the rooms are all white, with marble floors, the entire furniture of which consists of a few rocking chairs, with here and there a table and a couch. The apartments are large and cool, and the beautiful young ladies sitting in the rocking chairs by the window side, would tell us how well suited is this style of *dolce far niente* home for the heat of a tropical climate.

On the other side we can observe a different phase of Cuban life.

We perceive the Machina, surrounded by innumerable vessels of every nation under the sun, which resort here to fetch the wealth of the island. On the quays we see millions of hogsheads, boxes, and bags, on which are written coffee, sugar, cocoa, vanille, indigo, tobacco, &c., while scores of negroes and Chinamen are shipping all these treasures in the various vessels.

But the *Junta de Sanidad*, and the custom-house officers, come on board, and, after going through the few necessary formalities, we are at last told that we are free to land.

The fleet of little gondolas, steamers, and fairy-boats which surround us is increased at every moment. Each hotel sends its boat to meet every steamer that comes into the harbour; and large barges full of tropical fruits are also grouped around the vessel, tempting us with the beauty and fragrance of their cargoes.

At last General Herbert, the American Consul, arrived in the Captain-General's elegant little steamer, and soon afterwards we found ourselves seated by his side, gliding along swiftly and threading our way through the numerous little boats on the blue waters of the beautiful bay.

Ah! who would not exclaim at seeing this wondrous scene for the first time, as Columbus did,

“Es la tierra mas hermosa que jamas vieron mis ojos.” \*

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\* “It is the most beautiful country that my eyes ever beheld!”

## XVII.

“ The West Indies I behold,  
Like th’ Hesperides of old,  
—Trees of life with fruits of gold.”

MONTGOMERY.

THE little steamer of the Captain-General landed us at the Machina, such is the name of one of the landing places about the centre of the bay.

Everything looks quaint, strange, and foreign, as we step on shore.

Crowds of negroes and Chinamen surround us on every side ; one takes a trunk, another a parcel, and with no little noise and fuss on the part of these variegated assistants, and great amusement on the part of Lilian Leigh, we find ourselves seated at last in General Herbert’s carriage.

What a novel scene meets our eyes in every street and at every turn !

The carriage, which is open, takes us quickly through the regular but narrow streets. The air is now burning hot, and the rays of the sun shine full upon us even through the awnings which cover every street from side to side. These are becoming more deserted as the heat of the day advances ; soon they will be perfectly empty, for



here night is turned into day, or rather day is turned into night, and every one seeks, on a cool couch, the refreshing and pleasant sleep of the *Siesta*.

We soon reach the Hotel San Carlos, where General Herbert lives, and where we intend to put up. This is one of the best hotels of the city, situated on the Alameda de Paula, with fine views over the lovely bay.

Mrs Herbert received us ; we found her to be a most agreeable, well-informed, and charming American lady, and we soon became great friends. I perceived that she received Lady Leigh as a kind mother might have done, which raised her a great deal in my favour.

I had a room given to me on the first floor, which, in this country, is either the topmost or the middle one, the walls were unpapered, but painted white, and having a gaudy border of bright colours, reaching to about the height of three feet. The floor was of white and black marble, and had no carpet excepting just beside the bed. This did not please me very much. It was an iron bedstead, without mattresses or bedding of any kind. A very tightly drawn canvass and a couple of frilled sheets composed the entire bedding. To my English idea of comfort, this seemed a most detestable couch ; but I soon got accustomed to it, and as I afterwards learnt, this sort of bed is considered by far the most healthy and suitable in every way for tropical climates.

The room was large, and had four enormous doors; one on either side, conducting into the adjoining rooms, whilst another of them opened into a wide balcony which overlooked the bay; the Indian laurels of the Alameda shading it from the hot rays of the mid-day sun.

This balcony I found had no windows, or at least, not what in Europe we would call a window; it possessed Venetian blinds and outside shutters, but as for glass, there was none, excepting a very small slip let into one of the side panels. This, as I learnt in time, is another useless thing in a tropical country where cold is never to be dreaded.

The fourth, and opposite door opened into a spacious marble hall, which served as general dining-room to the hotel, and was fitted up accordingly, with a great many dining tables of various sizes, each of which was always covered with its snow-white cloth, and shining plate full of tempting-looking tropical fruits. This immense gallery had also enormous windows with venetian shutters, which looked upon the courtyard in the centre of the building, and ran all round the house.

The other two doors in my room opened, as I have said, into the adjoining rooms on either side, which would thus make a suite of apartments if required for a family.

What first strikes one, in Cuban houses, is the enormous size of everthing—doors, windows,

galleries, passages—they all seem to have been built for giants.

At last, I was in the Havana, the city I had so often dreamt about; the city of Columbus, Velasquez, and Fernan-Cortes; the capital of the island so bravely defended by its first peaceful inhabitants; and made so interesting to us by the writings of Las Casas, Prescott, Washington Irving, and so many others. As I sat in my large rocking-chair by the window side, looking over the blue waters of the bay, my mind was full of those glorious recollections of the gallant adventurers who first discovered this beautiful land.

The harbour, spread out like a panorama before my eyes, is considered one of the finest in the world. The entrance is very narrow, so narrow indeed, that they say it is possible to speak from one side to the other. On one side of this entrance rises the fortress of the Morro, on the other the castle of La Punta, both strongly guarded by cannons. Once past these castles, the bay widens out, and in front of the town it becomes an enormous harbour capable of holding thousands of ships; its waters are always calm and blue, and only rippled by a summer breeze, even when the infuriated sea outside the forts dashes against the walls of the Morro. It would seem as if the anger of the mighty element is soothed the instant it reaches this calm and beautiful haven.



This harbour is thus one of the strongest in the world, and if it were taken during the past century by the English, it was by surprise, and in the same way that the robber introduces himself through a half-shut door during the sleep of the porter.

After a long bombardment, for the siege had lasted several weeks, the English suddenly ceased all action ; they had not renounced the enterprise, but changed their plan of attack. Not having been able to succeed by force, they would now try stratagem. They knew that during the hot hours of the day the whole population, and even the garrison, indulged in the delicious refreshment of a *siesta*. The Spanish soldier, vigilant and brave at any hour of the night, fell into a deep sleep when the hot sun of the tropics shone with all its power upon his head.

At mid-day the English squadron entered the bay in silence, not one cannon was fired ; and, what was the surprise of the Cubans that afternoon, when they awoke from their unfortunate sleep, to find the English in full force inside their impregnable harbour !

In the afternoon I went out with Professor Farren for a first ramble through the city. The sun was now going down, and the Havaneros were coming gradually out of their houses to enjoy the cool of the evening.

What first strikes a stranger in the Havana is



the want of people to be seen in the city ; there are no common people, strange to say, for the whole population may be said to be divided into two classes, masters and slaves, the first of which may be again divided into two classes, the nobility and the commercial class, which is the largest, and is in its greatest part composed of Catalans, and natives of the Canary Islands. There are very few or no white servants ; no poor people, excepting the Chinamen or coolies, recently imported into the island ; and the slaves from Africa. This alone gives the town a look peculiar to itself.

As we walked through the shady streets we had plenty of new things to wonder at and to admire. Cuban ladies never walk in the street ; and even white men walk so little, that it is quite by accident you meet one, excepting foreigners, and particularly English, who of course will always do every thing in their own way.

Every lady in Havana has a carriage, generally a *volanta* or *quitrin*, which is a two-wheeled carriage with very long shafts, which rest upon a horse, by the side of which, but a little ahead, is another horse, upon which rides the driver, or *calesero*. These carriages are generally kept in the hall of every house, so as to be ready at any moment ; for a Cuban lady would not like to wait five minutes for her carriage if she had made up her mind to go out.

Every house, however poor, has its *volanta*, but besides these, there are hundreds of public victorias in every street to be hired for twenty-five cents, besides cars, tramways, and omnibuses which go from one part of the city to the other ; the consequences are, that Cubans, either from indolence or vanity, never walk, and if they had to go two streets from their house they would go in a carriage.

## XVIII.

“ Where first his drooping sails Columbus furl’d,  
And sweetly rested in another world,  
Amidst the heaven-reflecting ocean, smiles  
A constellation of Elysian isles ;  
Fair as Orion when he mounts on high,  
Sparkling with midnight splendour from the sky ;  
They bask beneath the sun’s meridian rays,  
When not a shadow breaks the boundless blaze ;  
The breath of ocean wanders through their vales,  
In morning breezes, and in evening gales ;  
Earth from her lap perennial verdure pours,  
Ambrosial fruits and amaranthine flowers ;  
O’er the wild mountains and luxuriant plains,  
Nature in all the pomp of beauty reigns  
In all the pride of freedom.”

MONTGOMERY.

WHEN, in 1515, the filibusters, as they were called, burnt and sacked the old town of San Cristobal de Cuba, the capital was removed to the present city of Havana, then a little village known as Puerto de Larenas. The present site of the Castle of la Punta was occupied by the village of Batabanoa.

Strong walls were built all round the city—walls which the city has, however, outgrown long ago ; those by the side of the sea and bay still exist ; but those on the land side have lately been pulled down, and the ground they occupied

is being turned into *paseos* and boulevards, thus joining the numerous suburbs of San Antonio, Luz, Jesus-del-Monte, Cerro, &c., &c., to the town itself.

The streets of the town that was till lately enclosed within these walls, are all built at right angles, and on account of the heat of the climate are narrow. This, however, is not an inconvenience, for there are streets by which to go, and streets by which to return; or, as they call it here, streets to ascend, and streets to descend, so that carriages never meet going in opposite directions. The houses are generally low, the highest having only three stories, while the greater part only possess one; the rooms are thus all on the ground-floor, and open to the street, like the old Roman, or rather Pompeian dwellings. In the houses where there are two floors, the upper one is the principal, the basement being then devoted to commerce, and occupied either by shops or warehouses; and the *entresol* serving as a residence for the shopkeepers. These latter edifices are the finest; they are perfect mansions, some of which—particularly those occupied by the nobility—are palaces in every respect.

In the Havana there is no specially fashionable quarter as in London or New York; no West End, or Fifth Avenue; the houses are all mixed up, and we often see a magnificent palace by the side of dingy little shops; and even shabby ware-



houses smelling of tar and turpentine, under a magnificent palatial residence of some grandee of the island.

The houses are all open ; the shops have no windows whatever ; but the whole store is exposed to the gaze of the curious passer-by, and even the private houses are so open, that the people in the street can see everything that is going on inside.

When there is a party in one of these houses the street is crammed with people looking through the windows at the ladies and gentlemen dancing inside ; but as there are no—what in other places would be called, common people—nobody minds, and ices and refreshments are even sometimes sent out to them by the kind host. Families in mourning, have been known to attend in this way parties to which they dared not go openly for fear of criticism.

But although the houses are all wide open to the street, they are, nevertheless, as impregnable as fortresses ; for the walls are immensely thick, and every window—even those in the roof—is barred like a prison with strong perpendicular iron bars, through which it would be impossible to get into the house.

An immense doorway gives entrance to most Cuban houses, through which is pierced a smaller door so as not to open the large one, which is covered with brass knobs and door-plates, and is only opened for the entrance or exit of the car-

riage. As you enter, the first thing that strikes your attention is this same elegant piece of furniture—for such a carriage is considered here—which is always kept in the hall; then passing through a marble inner hall, you enter the house.

The rooms are all open. From the drawing-room or saloon you can see the rest of the house to the very bed-rooms, which seem only made for show, and are gorgeously decorated.

The walls are white; and the floor is generally of black and white or variegated marble. In some houses columns take the place of walls, and then curtains are hung between the marble columns to divide the rooms. Indeed, in some houses it is almost impossible to tell where one room ends, and another begins.

The entire length of the reception-rooms is taken up by two rows of rocking-chairs parallel to each other. Between these there is a small narrow carpet where the sitter's feet can rest. The people of the house and their visitors sit in these chairs and rock themselves for hours without ever changing their position, which would be considered a breach of etiquette until departure necessitates a formal leave-taking—when, if the visitor is a lady, all rise; and if a gentleman, the men only rise and the ladies bow.

Such is a Cuban house. When there are two stories to the house, the principal rooms are in the upper one, and then a marble staircase proudly

rises from the inner hall. When the house is large, there is a garden in the centre with a fountain, and round it a marble colonnade very much in the style of the houses in Seville. In the dwellings outside the walls, the garden is at the back, and the entire front is taken up by a handsome stone verandah with marble pillars and statues.

But it is time I should go back to my first ramble through this strange but fascinating city.

Neither the Professor nor I had ever been in the Havana before, so we made many mistakes, and got lost not a few times before we reached the Plaza de Armas, where we had intended to go.

This is a large, handsome public square planted with palm-trees, orange-trees, and various other tropical plants. In the centre is a stone statue of Ferdinand VII. ; and the principal side of it is taken up by the palace of the Captain-General, a magnificent building, not unlike a royal residence. The other sides are occupied by the Lonja, the palace of the Count de Santovenia ; and the Temple, a Grecian-looking temple erected to the memory of Columbus, on the site where the first mass was offered up in the New World.

Not far from the Plaza de Armas is the Cathedral, which we visited the same day. It is a large stone building, an unhappy mixture of



Gothic, Moorish, Spanish and Mexican styles of architecture, which still has a peculiar beauty of its own, like all the works of art of a young nation, being a primitive endeavour to imitate the best efforts of other more advanced countries.

Originally it served as a chapel consecrated to San Isidoro ; in 1724 it was re-constructed by the Society of Jesus ; and later on, the unfortunate Jesuits having been expelled from the island, their church became the first parish of the town ; and at a still later period the cathedral of the bishopric of Havana, only second to the great cathedral at Cuba.

It is built of a peculiar brown stone, carved and moulded into all sorts of primitive designs. The façade, however, with its curious towers, niches, columns, and large doors, is rather striking. You ascend to it by a flight of stone steps the whole width of the building.

The inside is poor and dark, in spite of its many altars and colossal mahogany pillars. The large altar and the choir are in good taste, and exceedingly rich and handsome.

The church altogether, considered as a cathedral, is poor ; but for every one who visits it, has one object of the very greatest interest—the grave of Columbus.

It consists of a small stone ornamented with the portrait of the great Admiral in basso-relievo,



situated on the left of the great high altar. Under the portrait is written :

*“ O restos e imagen del gran Colon!  
Mil siglos durad, guardados en la urna,  
Y en la remembranza de nuestra nacion.”*

After death, as in life, the destiny of the great discoverer was to traverse the ocean. His death occurred at Valladolid ; his remains were first sent to Seville, from thence to Santa Domingo, and finally to the Havana in the year 1796, where they are very naturally prized by the Cubans as the relics of a saint.

Near the Cathedral is the Fish Market, where every kind of fish, from whitebait to shark, is exhibited for sale.

After rambling through the *Calle del Ohispo*, where all the best shops are situated, and the market (*mercado de Cristina*), we went back to the hotel to join Lady Leigh and Mrs Herbert, with whom we proceeded in a carriage to the Paseo, which is the handsome promenade outside the walls, between the old town and the new, and might well be called, as in Vienna, the *Ring* of the town. Here we had an opportunity of admiring the beautiful Cuban women, as they passed us in their elegant volantas, reclining languidly amidst clouds of tulle or lace, with low dresses, and nothing on their heads save their abundant hair, adorned, generally speaking, with flowers, and often with jewels and precious stones.

This *Paseo*, or public promenade and drive, is the afternoon resort of the fashionable world of the Havana, and sometimes it is so crowded with carriages that these can hardly move, and proceed at a slow pace, one behind the other, up and down, sometimes coming to a dead stand-still when some other carriage dashes in from a neighbouring street to occupy its place in the ranks—and to do this, it will sometimes have to wait till the *Calesero* (postilion or driver) of some friend's carriage will make room for it to enter.

It is a handsome promenade, with trees on either side, and fountains in the middle; the buildings on it are principally clubs, theatres, and hotels. The Tacon Opera House, one of the largest theatres in the world, and certainly the handsomest in America, is situated on this promenade.

As the evening advances, the crowd becomes larger and larger; and when night comes all at once, as it does in this climate, where there is no twilight, the entire promenade is in an instant transformed, as by a *coup de theatre*, into a dazzling scene illumined by thousands of brilliant gas-lights, when it has the effects of the Champs Elysées in miniature. Indeed, when lighted by the pure white rays of the silvery moon of the tropics shining on the feathery leaves of the palm-trees, and making them appear as of silver, I can only compare it to the grand tableau at the end of a fairy tale.

## XIX.

“ Ah! No es cierto, angel de amor,  
Que en esta apartada orilla  
Mas pura la luna brilla  
Y se respira mejor?  
Esta aura, que vaga llena  
De los sencillos olores  
De las campesinas flores  
Que brota esta orilla amena;  
Esa agua limpia y serena  
Que atraviesa sin temor  
La barca del pescador,  
Que espera cantando el dia,  
No es cierto, paloma mia  
Que estan respirando amor?”

*José Zorrilla.*

WE had been a week already in Havana. The charm of novelty had by this time nearly worn out, but I still found something to admire and wonder at in this quaint capital of the tropics.

The indolent, luxurious life we led, rendered our existence doubly happy in this land, where to breathe is to enjoy.

I still lodged at the Hotel San Carlos, where General and Mrs Herbert lived; but although in the same house with Lilian Leigh, and seeing her every day, I very seldom had a *tête-à-tête* with her, for which I must confess I was not sorry.

I will try to describe, if possible, the strange sort of life I led amidst these beautiful scenes of tropical life.

Early in the morning, at the break of day, a negro used to come into my apartment, and present me with a cup of that delicious coffee only obtainable in the land of its growth. I then got up and opened the Venetian blinds, letting the first rays of coming day inundate the room with the balmy breeze of the neighbouring sea.

After a refreshing bath I sat in the balcony, lazily rocking myself in my rocking-chair, contemplating the bay before me, with its thousand ships and steamers ; and the immense warehouses on the opposite shore, near Regla, shaded by groves of orange and *ceibas*, over which rose in supreme grace and majesty the royal palm peculiar to the island.

A book was generally on my knees, but my eyes seldom rested upon its pages, the all-absorbing scene constantly before them, proving too strong an attraction for me to resist. Indeed, what book is comparable to the wondrous work of nature when it unfolds its glorious pages amidst scenes such as this !

Besides, there were the ever-moving vessels, a constant object of amusement and interest—some preparing their white sails like beautiful sea gulls pluming their wings for a fresh flight across the ocean ; others arriving, proudly and gallantly



swimming past my windows like queens of the sea, their decks often crowded with life. Where had they come from?—what human hopes and sorrows did they bear to this new shore?—were thoughts that would fill my mind as I stood on my balcony and watched them till the minutes grew into hours, and it was time to prepare for the morning meal, before I had read a single page.

At eleven we breakfasted. A Cuban breakfast is a regular dinner—a second edition, or rather a first one of that meal—the only difference being, that in the former the coffee is served at the beginning, while in the latter it is served at the end. The number of dishes is the same, but always varied and delicious, for the *cuisine créole* is famous throughout the world.

The principal feature, however, of this our early meal, was a plate of eggs and rice with tomatoes, which is eaten with fried plantains, and sweet potatoes—those two delicious productions of the island.

After breakfast I generally went out to study Cuban life, sometimes with Professor Farren, but most days alone.

During the hot hours of the day the streets of Havana, although covered by awnings, and thus guarded from the rays of the sun, are generally deserted. Most of the shops are shut, and the town presents the appearance of a deserted city. Pompeii itself could hardly look more dead.

But here and there a man standing close by a window, inside of which, half hidden by the white curtain, we can perceive a pair of large and flashing black eyes, serves to assure us that the Habaneros are not dead, but only appear so. It is a strange fact that here the sun takes the place of the moon as the protector of lovers.

But we must not be too severe upon these little peccadillos, so common in the south. In Spain "*pelar la pava*" is indeed the acknowledged way of love-making, and all young people must necessarily spend a part of their lives in gentle and innocent flirtation through the iron bars of a ground floor window.

A few business men, and a priest or two, compose, with the lovers before mentioned, the whole population of Havana during the hot hours of the day. Thus, during the best part of the morning, movement is the exception, sleep the rule. Even the slave from the burning soil of Africa sinks on a door step, or in any shady corner he can find at hand, overcome by the heat.

During these few hours of relaxation and rest I often, when by myself, retired into some church or other, where the air is always cool and pleasant.

The church of La Merced, in the corner of Merced and Cuba streets, used to be a favourite resort of mine. This is the most fashionable, as well as the most elegant, church of the city ; it is large and well proportioned, and an air of comfort

and prosperity pervades it, which is more than I can say for the other churches of the Havana.

The Cuban ladies often frequent this church during the morning, especially on Sundays ; and if a foreigner wishes to behold those elegant hours of the tropics, this is certainly the place from whence he can best direct his observations.

To go to church, the Havana ladies generally adopt the graceful Spanish mantilla, which they wear with a grace not inferior to that of the most beautiful daughters of Seville or Cadiz. Others, however, prefer the Parisian bonnet, or the Madrid veil, but they always wear something on their heads to enter a church, and also, perhaps, to make a difference from their afternoon toilette, when they display their beautiful and abundant curls uncovered.

The Cuban churches, like those of Spain and Italy, have no pews or seats of any kind ; so every lady is accompanied by one or two slaves—these are generally little children attired as grooms, with top-boots and hats, who carry respectively a small chair, and a carpet. Upon this they sit, and with their enormous fans keep time to the music, while their large liquid eyes wander round the building, probably seeking among the young gallants, who are grouped around the marble columns, their special *inamorato*.

The church of La Merced is dedicated to the Virgin (our Lady of Mercy), whose image is



placed upon a throne of gold on the high altar.

This beautiful statue is enormously rich ; her dresses are of the most wonderful materials, and her jewels surpass all description ; her crown, which is kept in the *sacristia* at the side of the church, is alone worth millions ; she also possesses a golden carriage, and an altar of precious stones.

She has a regular household. Maids of honour, ladies and lords in waiting, grooms of the chamber, and a mistress of the robes, who has under her charge all her dresses and jewels, and who is obliged to replace them, and add to the collection every year. This post, which is considered one of great honour, belongs to the noble family of Montalvo, and is held to-day by the Dowager Countess, who esteems it as her greatest distinction. The other posts are also taken by ladies of rank, who rival each other in their splendid presents and devoted zeal. All this for a wooden image ! Where will the fanaticism of the world carry it to ?

I must confess that to my mind the poor grave of Columbus, in the deserted cathedral, is more worthy of veneration than all the images under the sun.

By the time I come out of the church, all is life again in the city ; the shops open their doors ; the negroes go about the streets carrying pines, oranges, and bananas ; the lottery ticket vendors



vie with each other in crying out as usual the number of their tickets; the yellow-faced Chinamen go about with their peculiar dress; the mulattoes drive their donkies, laden to a great height with *maloja*, or fodder for horses; the *Guajiros* run to and fro trying to sell to the best of their ability the varied productions of their little gardens outside the walls; and business begins anew in all its divers phases.

At five we dine, after which we all start in *volantas* for the promenade, or for some excursion or other to the suburbs of the town or its environs.

These are numerous and interesting; particularly those of Puentes Grandes, and Marianao, which, I am told, are very fashionable and crowded resorts in the summer season. They are all rich in country houses, or quintas, some of which are regular little palaces in the midst of lovely gardens, in which the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics is cultivated with the greatest care and taste.

In the Cerro, and in the Paseos de Tacon, and de Isabel II. there are also some fine villa residences surrounded by marble colonnades. These are mostly of only one floor high; but at the back they have large gardens, the palms and *ceibas* of which rise to a considerable height over the building, giving it a cool, fresh, and elegant appearance.

At night, when one passes in front of these mansions, one is often compelled to stop before them to admire the elegance and beauty of their interiors. The rooms are all brightly illuminated by gas, under which the marble statues seem to come to life against the dark green tropical plants with which they are surrounded. As there are no windows, the whole house can be seen from the outside ; and in those marble halls and galleries, the eyes of a foreigner wander in astonishment, as do those of a child before the transformation scene of his first pantomime.

In some of them we see elegant women dancing the graceful waltz of Cuba, so well calculated to display their slender forms, and in which the feet scarcely move at all ; for, as there must be contradictions in every thing in this world, these languid daughters of the tropics, whom one would suppose too indolent ever to move from their rocking-chairs, are passionately fond of dancing.

At night we often repaired to the Tacon Theatre, where an excellent opera company was performing, under the direction of Signor Tamberlick, the celebrated tenor. Both the singing and the *mise en scene* seemed to me far superior to those I had but recently witnessed at the New York Opera House.

We generally finished the day with a sail on the bay by moonlight in one of the gondolas.

This, perhaps, was the most delightful of all. Nothing can compare with the stillness and beauty of those soft moonlight hours, passed under the warm southern sky of this most glorious bay of the Havana.

All was gentle and soft like the moonlight, and the gondola glided over the phosphorescent waves, like those flies which walk upon the water and hardly seem to touch it.

From the bay we could see the whole town spread out before us, with its many towers and spires, all glittering in the moonlight ; while on the other side Regla and Casa Blanca, with its immense fortifications, looked dark and dim in the distant background.

Ever and anon the tinkling of some distant guitar, or the dash caused upon the water by some fairy boat, or passing steamer, came to break the stillness of the scene, calling us back to its reality.

Over our heads the spectacle was more sublime and not less beautiful. The many constellations of the south, presided over by the great southern cross itself, the most beautiful of them all, gently smiled down upon the scene below, as they had been doing for untold ages upon other races and generations of men. Every moment of that delicious sail, on that lovely bay, seemed a century of bliss for us, and we regretted every stroke of the oars, which brought us nearer and nearer to

its termination. When at last, at a late hour of the night, we regained the hotel, it was with regret that we shut out the lovely scene,—those glorious stars, and that glittering sea. For my part, I only laid my head upon my pillow, to see it all over again in my dreams—and to long for the repetition of its reality on the next night and the next again.



## XX.

“Ye tropic forests of unfading green !  
Where the palm tapers and the orange glows—  
Where the light bamboo waves her feathery screen,  
And her far shade the matchless Ceiba throws.

“Ye cloudless ethers of unchanging blue !  
Save where the rosy streaks of eve give way  
To the clear sapphire of your midnight hue,  
The burnished azure of your perfect day !”

LORD MORPETH.

THE two weeks I had spent at Havana had passed like a pleasant dream. My life had been a succession of happy events ; all was calm, bright and peaceful around me ; and yet I was not happy ! In my happiest moment I needed something to make my joy complete, something which I thought impossible ever to find in this world ; and yet something which I had possessed in my rambles over the bleak and wild, but to me, heavenly shores of Caledonia during my happy honeymoon.

The most tame of scenes has a certain charm when viewed in the company of a beloved being ; and the most luxuriant of tropical pictures seems dull and uninteresting when visited alone. Yet

I was not alone, I had plenty of companions, and one of the greatest belles of America by my side ; but what were they all to me ? For one moment I had fancied that Lilian entertained some slight affection, if not more for me ; but now I was convinced of the contrary. She might like Lord Carlton and his estates very well, but she did not love the man.

Now that I could see through her, I despised her coquettish, deceitful ways ; she would have liked to imprison me in her charms, but if she had met with a more advantageous offer later on, I could not help thinking that she would have been only too glad to have set me free.

Since that memorable night of the 10th of December, a coolness had sprung up between us ; a coolness that threatened to last ; for an explanation was impossible after the strange events which had preceded the horrors of the Fifth Avenue fire. We saw each other every day, it is true ; but a strange feeling of reserve prevailed in all our conversations ; and extraordinary to say, Lilian Leigh, instead of seeking my company, as she had done before, now dreaded even more than I did, to find ourselves alone together.

She was therefore no company to me, and her uncle, Professor Farren, was scarcely more so, for with him I could never hope to sympathise. His cold and sceptical opinions froze my heart to

stone, and disgusted me as much as his cynical, hopeless, and faulty philosophy, which to me explained nothing.

Thus, in the midst of splendid scenes, and surrounded by the finest of nature's lovely works, I felt sad and alone, and wished myself far away from this enchanting world which said so little to my heart.

General and Mrs Herbert were, however, very kind to me, taking me everywhere with them, and shewing me all the different sights of the Havana and its surroundings.

About this time they formed a large party to visit the town of Matanzas, situated about two hours by the railway from the capital, and they insisted that Lady Leigh, her uncle, and myself, should join the expedition.

We started on the 14th of January from the great station in the town of Regla, to which we went by one of the many ferry steamers which cross the bay in all directions.

The Cuban railway carriages are very much like the American cars, from which they have been copied, but are of course adapted to the country, being open at the sides, protected with Venetian blinds, and having straw seats instead of stuffed velvet or cloth ones.

The country through which we passed was rich, and covered with the most wonderful vegetation. The grass is of a dark bluish green

hue, which the hottest sun of the summer never turns into gold ; and over this rise one over the other in luxuriant profusion, *ceibas* (cottonwood trees), with their parasites, the graceful *cupey* and *jaguey*, banana-trees, plantains, mameys, cocoa-nut, palms, and above all, the royal palm, which seems to rise from the cane and coffee fields below, and to pierce the very sky above, straight, unbending, and evergreen, forming the most perfect of lightning conductors, and thus preserving the rich crops from the fire of the atmosphere.

Nothing can in any way compare with the general aspect of the country, in this, the pearl of the Antilles, and when the glorious sun sinks in the west, the effects of colouring are beyond all description. This was what we all felt, as we flew along past sugar-cane fields, and palm-tree groves, with the last rays of the setting sun.

Matanzas is a fine city, built at the head of the bay of the same name, between the rivers Yumuri and San Juan, which bound it on the east and west. This gives the town, when viewed from one of the bridges built over these rivers, an aspect not unlike that which Venice presents when seen from the top of the Rialto, although in every other respect it is a genuine Spanish city.

I have heard many people say that the island



of Cuba was much more Spanish than the old country itself, where the French and Italian fashions have been adopted for the most part. Of this I cannot judge, but I should say that if any, Matanzas was decidedly the most Castilian of all the towns I have visited in the whole island. The streets are narrow but straight, and well built, the houses being very like those I have already described in Havana. The Calzada de San Esteban is, perhaps, a finer street than any in the latter town, but for the rest the general appearance of both cities is pretty much the same.

We put up at the Hotel "Leon de Oro," where we found rooms already prepared for us. After dinner we went to the Plaza de Armas, a very handsome public square in front of the governor's palace, planted with considerable taste with shrubberies, flowers, palms, and laid out in all directions with paved and gravelled walks, adorned with handsome gas lamps.

Round it there are some fine houses, cafés, and hotels, and in its centre a military band plays every evening. This evening music is called the "Retreta." The appearance of this square during the fine star-light nights of the winter months, is indeed a novel and, at the same time, a pretty one.

The walks are filled with ladies and gentlemen, the former beautifully dressed with light gay

colours, and nothing in the hair unless it be a natural flower; and all round the square are grouped hundreds of elegant carriages, also full of ladies, taking their ices, and listening to the sweet strains of the military music.

There is a handsome new opera house in Matanzas which, to judge from its façade—rich in marble colonnades and statues—must be as fine a one as that of the Havana, but unfortunately I cannot speak of the interior, as the only night we might have gone to it, it rained, and in this country when it rains there is no performance, so we were obliged to remain at the hotel, and amuse ourselves round the grand piano.

## XXI.

What wonder then, if fields and regions here  
Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run  
Potable gold, when with one virtuous touch  
Th' arch-chemic sun, so far from us remote,  
Produces, with terrestrial humour mix'd  
Here in the dark, so many precious things,  
Of colour glorious, and effects so rare ?

NEAR the town of Matanzas are the celebrated stalactite caves of Bellamar, which are by some considered the most perfect in the world.

We all set out to visit them one morning when the sun had hardly yet begun to colour the eastern sky.

We were a large party, and, as the Cuban *volantas* only hold two persons with comfort, we formed a procession of ten carriages, besides a few men on horseback, and half a dozen guides.

Mrs Herbert and I occupied one, and Lady Leigh another, with a Cuban gentleman belonging to the party ; I could see that she was vexed that I had not offered her my company during the whole of the journey, but I determined rather to incur her displeasure than the dangerous fire of her violet eyes.

The drive to the caves was delicious, the cool fresh air of the early morning, and afterwards the

exhilarating sea breeze, for our road lay partly by the sea-shore, prevented our feeling the fatigue we should otherwise have done.

The sun as yet only gilded some of the sapphire-like waves of the glittering blue sea, and had no power to harm us ; so we were able to have our *volantas* open, and enjoyed the beautiful scene in all its loveliness.

Presently we left the sea-shore, and began to ascend the mountains on the right by a winding path, exceedingly rugged and stony—so much so, that we were all obliged to get out and walk the greater part of the way, not being able to bear the jolting of the carriages.

At last we arrived at a little house in the middle of a large field, which proved to be the entrance to the caves.

Here we took off as much of our clothing as we possibly could—for the grottoes, the guides told us, were exceedingly warm—we therefore left our superabundant clothing in charge of the men at the cottage, who undertook to furnish us with breakfast on our return from our visit of exploration.

The caves of Bellamar are indeed beautiful—to my mind even more so than the caves of Adelsberg, in the south of Austria, although not half so extensive. Some of the grottoes sparkle like myriads of diamonds, whilst others present the appearance of temples in the most beautiful style of decoration. The Gothic temple, for instance,



is far exceeding in brilliancy and colouring any of the numerous caves at Adelsberg, for the stalactites here are much more perfect and brilliant than any in the former caves, where the continual smoke of thousands of tallow candles has greatly marred their beauty, and rendered them in course of time dim and opaque. The cave of Bellamar is now lighted by gas, but only in some places, the greater part being as yet only visible by the torches carried by the guides.

In this newly discovered cave, as in the great European one, every specimen of crystal formation has received a name. I remember one particularly striking pillar, which is called "the Mantle of the Virgin," and another, scarcely less beautiful, known as "the Fountain of Snow."

The stalactites are of various colours, varying from the pure white of the diamond to the deep red of the ruby, and the bluish hue of the sapphire. Our guides sometimes placed their torches behind some of the most projecting ones, causing them in this way to sparkle and glitter just like the precious stones before-mentioned.

The cave is nearly four miles long, but we did not visit it in its whole extent, contenting ourselves with viewing its finest grottoes.

When we once more emerged into the open air, after two hours passed in the close, confined air, and intensely suffocating heat of the depths of the earth, we appreciated, as perhaps we had

never done before, the fresh, although by this time sultry breeze, of the neighbouring sea.

After a light breakfast, which consisted principally of eggs, rice, coffee, and the delicious fruits of the country, which to us were still so entirely new, we took our seats again in the *volantas*, and returned to our hotel in the same order that we had come.

Another very delightful excursion to be made from Matanzas is to the valley of the Yumuri.

The history attached to this lovely valley is as romantic as its situation. When the early Spanish adventurers captured the bay and its surroundings, they massacred all the poor, peaceful natives, who, as they jumped into the river, now called by those words converted into a name, cried, "*Yo—muri*"—that is, "I die." From this inhuman and cruel massacre proceeds also the name of the town, Matanzas (massacre).

During our stay in this city, General Herbert received an invitation to a grand *fête* that was to be given by the Count of Guanabacoa to celebrate the saint's day of his wife on his sugar estate known as the "*Ingenio de la Azucena*." This invitation included the whole of his party, as well as his wife and himself; so as the others accepted it, I of course gladly decided to accompany them, as perhaps this would be my only chance of studying real Cuban life during my stay in the island.

## XXII.

“All is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

“Todo es vanidad en este mundo.”

QUEVEDO.

THE Count of Guanabacoa's estate Azucena, is situated at a distance of two hours by railway from Matanzas. There is a small station on the estate itself, so when we reached it, we had but a short drive to the house.

The little station and the avenue near it, were gaily decorated with flags and garlands of flowers, to celebrate the occasion; here we found three volantas belonging to the count, to drive us to the house, which was about a mile from the railway.

A handsome avenue of palm trees of enormous height, formed the approach, and we entered it soon after leaving the station.

We found the mansion at which we arrived some ten minutes afterwards, to be a large two-floor building, constructed almost entirely of stone and wood. A handsome marble colonnade extended the whole of one side, below which were the extensive gardens and pleasure grounds.

On the other side, and across an immense square planted with trees, were the sugar works, the Batey, as it is called, the Casa de Molienda, or engine-house for crushing cane, and the houses of the Chinamen, and barracks for the slaves.

The count and countess received us as we alighted from our *volantas* ; we then learnt that the greater part of the guests invited had already arrived. The house was as full as it could hold, several people sleeping in one room, for there were about two hundred persons in all. I, however, fortunately had a room to myself, a pleasant little apartment opening on to the garden.

General Herbert told me that I should meet the best people of Cuba here, for the noble count was a general favourite, and his house was one of the most hospitable and pleasant in the whole island.

I almost began to think the guests would never end, as we sat in the large marble saloon, each in a rocking chair, waiting for dinner. Generals and their wives and daughters, counts and countesses, a handsome duchess, dressed in white tulle, and glittering with diamonds, priests and coquettes, bankers and nobles, here they all were, ready to sit at the same table.

The men were all in full evening dress, although it was yet day, and great elegance prevailed amongst the ladies, although, for the most part, they were in simple white tulle or



muslin dresses, with low bodies, short sleeves, and flowers in their hair ; some of them had splendid jewels, and they all looked fresh and young, even the mammas, a thing one seldom sees in Europe, where the artificial life we lead renders women prematurely old.

Nothing could equal the general effect of the many beautiful groups and lovely faces, as they sat or stood here and there in this grand saloon. It was a splendid sight, and yet the room had nothing gaudy or even rich in its appearance—no gold, no pictures, no satin chairs, nothing but the whitest of walls, marble floors, and hundreds of cane rocking chairs, placed in rows along the rooms. The same elegant simplicity prevailed all through the house ; there was nothing grand nor rich in it, and yet nothing could have equalled its cool, pleasant aspect, and its undeniable comfort.

Almost all the rooms opened into the garden, which was full of the most beautiful and costly flowers—such as we never see out of hot-houses in England. The luxuriant vegetation extended its branches into the very apartments, there being no windows to keep them out.

Inside the house there was another small garden, surrounded by marble colonnades, and ornamented with fountains and statues in the Pompeian style. This inner garden had an awning over it, so that during the hottest hours of the day one was able

to walk through it into the other parts of the house, which lay across the cool shade of its orange and lemon trees.

At last, dinner was announced. When we all proceeded in a long procession to the dining-room, another enormous hall as plain as the saloon, and also as cool and as elegant as the latter.

The dinner was long and elaborate, as such dinners generally are ; we were, however, too many people for it to be very pleasant. At least fifty negro slaves, all dressed in white liveries, waited upon us, one standing behind every two or three guests. I could not but wonder at the enormous quantity of servants employed in this establishment ; but I wondered no longer when Lady Leigh told me that there were at least six hundred slaves on that estate alone, besides many Chinamen, freemen, and white servants. "The greater part of the slaves," she added, "are, of course, entirely devoted to the field work and the machinery, and never make their appearance in the house."

When the first service was over, we all got up together, and went for a stroll in the gardens, the sun having now gone down ; we shortly returned, however, for the desert, which had been placed on the table during our absence. Cigarettes were passed round, together with the sweets and fruits, — a custom which, I believe, is very general in the island. The rooms being all open, the ladies

did not object to the smoking. I did not, however, see any lady indulge in it, although Lady Leigh told me some of the older ladies did so when by themselves.

After dinner, the young people proceeded directly to the ball-room. This was a most extraordinary building. In the midst of the garden, surrounded on all sides by trees and flowers, there was an arbour, or rather an immense cage, entirely constructed of gilt wires, through which were twined creepers and vines of various kinds, the grapes hanging gracefully inside. This enormous cage—for I really can find no better name for it—was paved with white marble, and lighted from the top by hundreds of gas jets, which lay hidden amongst the flowers and grapes.

Such was the ball-room in which we found ourselves after dinner, and which far surpassed in its elegance and brilliancy the most gorgeous of fairy palaces I had ever read about. There was no Asiatic luxury about it, no Alhambra-like marble halls, no gold nor jewels nor fine tapestry, nor invaluable paintings, nothing but the beauties of Nature, nothing but the wild, grand, luxurious nature of the tropics to adorn it.

While the young people danced the hours merrily away in this fairy-like ball-room, the older guests were gambling their money away in the scarcely less cool and beautiful drawing-rooms of the house.

The Cubans in general are passionately fond of gambling, at which they win and lose fabulous sums, sums which alone would ruin most Europeans. But in this country, where money is so easily made, gold seems to be but little appreciated.

It was a most extraordinary sight to see all these fine ladies, so proud and so beautiful, seated round a table, with heaps of gold before them, forgetting everything in the excitement of the game, whilst their negro slaves stood behind them, fanning them with their enormous fans, and anxiously watching the luck of their mistresses.

Lilian was here in her element. She flew from the house to the ball-room, danced with one after another, strolled through the dark paths of the garden with one handsome admirer and another; flirting with each in their turn, and at last, against my entreaties and urgent request, she sat down at a table to play at *Baca* with a rich banker, who offered to let her have his money if she would give him her luck.

Displeased with all, and still more disgusted with myself, I walked out of the gay room and wandered alone into the dark alleys of the garden, seeking in the solitude of the night the pleasure I could not derive from any of the gay scenes which surrounded me.



## XXIII.

Alone! alone!

MRS HEMANS.

Who was I in this gay palace? A stranger, a foreigner, unknown, uncared for. What were all these people to me but so many ghosts in a land of shadow; inhabitants of a world to which I no longer belonged.

A great crisis was hanging over me; I felt it coming, but I did not dread it; was it for my good? I could not tell; but certainly I was no longer the same man.

There was something preying upon my inner life, so that I could not be gay; to spend a few hours as formerly amid gaiety and gladness, seemed now to have become utterly impossible for me. I could no longer enter with spirit into either the pastimes, sports, or pleasures of my fellow beings; so I stole away from the gay crowd and wandered alone, pondering upon the mysteries of nature, with her ever-working, ever-consuming forces.

It was a beautiful night, there was no moon, but the stars shone brightly over my head, as so many suns of light, and as they only shine in the

tropics. The great southern cross was high upon the southern horizon ; and the refreshing land breeze, which in the tropics prevails by night, giving place to the sea breeze in the day time, played amongst the cactus, waving the enormous leaves of the palm-trees, and filling the air with the rustle of its sweet harmony.

I stept across the principal alley that led to the ball-room, and which was brilliantly illuminated with Venetian lamps of a hundred colours. I paced avenue after avenue of the splendid garden, until at last I emerged into a thick wood of plantain-trees and *cañas-bravas* (bamboos). Here, amongst pine apples, bananas, and all the wonders of tropical vegetation, I sat down to meditate.

I had not been long in this position when I heard voices coming towards me—two distinct and soft, but melodious voices. I kept my seat in silence, wondering who could be wandering in the wood at that hour, and who would thus quit the gay ball-room for the solitude of the bush ?

Then a soft woman's voice whispered at my very side—

“Can it be possible you love me ! Oh ! this is more than I dare believe.”

I started ; were these words addressed to me ?

But I was soon convinced of my mistake, for another voice, but this time a manly and richly toned one answered,—“Can you doubt it, Sera-

finá ; can you still doubt my words and my looks ? ”

“ Ah ! you men are so false,” responded the first voice I had heard ; “ and I am so young. . . . Oh, do not be angry with me, Carlos ; does not my very agitation tell you how *I* love *you* ! ”

“ Oh ! amor mio.”

And the echo of a long kiss reached my ear. Soon the voices were lost in the thickness of the wood, and I remained once more in solitude.

“ Ah love ! ” I then exclaimed, “ thou art the true mystery of happiness ; without thee, we are sad, dreary and alone ; and I, who have lost thee, can now only know solitude and sorrow.”

A distant low sound, as of many voices, now came vibrating on my ear, it grew louder and louder, then it ceased, and after a time it again burst forth. It resembled the cries of some wild animals rather than the human voice ; the regular motion of a steam-engine seemed to keep time to the wild voices.

This told me its origin. It was the wild singing of the negroes in the neighbouring *batey*, as they worked the machinery of the sugar-house, chanting their wild war-songs of central Africa.

The wind again changed, and again I was left in total silence, save the never-ceasing hum of the insects, for they, too, were singing as they worked.

“ Even in servitude man can be happy,” I

murmured ; “ even the slave, even the insect, has moments of pleasure, whilst I . . . ”

I was stopped short in the midst of my reflections by two other voices, which seemed to proceed from the very plantain-trees around me.

“ What a delightful spot, Silvestre ! ”

“ Yes, when by the side of a beloved one ! ”

“ You can soon enjoy it as much as ever you like then, Silvestre, when you are married.”

“ Married ! ”

“ Are you not engaged ? ”

A deep sigh was the only answer to this question ; the lady’s voice was the first to break the silence.

“ Silvestre,” she said, “ I envy her ! ”

“ Oh, Pilar, you are not happy with your husband ; I know you do not love him.—Confide in me.—Oh, if you could be my wife ! the companion of my life ! but you are married.”

“ No one forced me to marry him, Silvestre ; it is my own fault if I have made a mistake ;—but he does all he can to make me happy.”

“ And what man would not do as much ? As for me, Pilar, I would gladly give my life to make you happy—even for a single day ! ”

There was a rustling amongst the tall sugar-cane, and then the man’s voice again whispered softly, “ I love you.”

I heard a distant cry, and then the lady, who said hurriedly,



“We must fly; we are pursued.—My husband! Oh, Silvestre, he must not find us together, save me, save me from his jealousy!”

The rustling of a dress told me they had gone. I got up and prepared to go in my turn, but the sound of other voices again stopped me.

This time they were men’s voices, and in one I thought I recognised that of the first lover.

“Will you go to-morrow to the village?” it asked.

“Are you going, Carlos?”

“Yes, my friend, there is a girl there worth all the señoritas in the count’s house.”

“I thought you were in love with Serafina.”

“Of course I am in love with her. And what then? Am I only to love *her*? That would be very dull work!”

“And she loves you, the poor girl?”

“Of course she does. She has been brought up in the country, and I believe I am the first man who has spoken to her of love.”

“And you do not love her? Are you not ashamed of yourself, Carlos?”

“Oh no! You know one must amuse oneself. When I have done with her I’ll pass her over to some friend. But do come to the village to-morrow; I’ll introduce you to my *muchacha*.”

The voices were soon afterwards lost in the thickness of the wood.

I got up this time, and made my way as best I could out of the *platanar*. I had heard enough. Was this what they all called love—happiness? Oh, shame!—a wife who deceives her husband!—a man who deceives an innocent young girl!—Was this all the world could offer me as an example of happiness and love?

“Oh Conchita, Conchita!” I exclaimed, “Would to God you were here, that I might show them what real love is! Or that I were with you in your bright home!”

And a cold breeze passed over my brow, as of a kiss, so soft, so sweet, so lingering, that I knew I was not alone.

## XXIV.

“ A poor old slave, infirm and lame ;  
Great scars deformed his face ;  
On his forehead he bore the brand of shame,  
And the rags that hid his mangled frame,  
Were the livery of disgrace.”

LONGFELLOW.

As I emerged from the plantain wood, a novel and spirited scene burst upon my view.

In my rambling walk through the gardens and woods, I had crossed the whole extent of the pleasure-grounds, and now I found myself standing in front of the *Batey*, or works of the sugar estate, comprising the sugar-mill, purging-house, drying-house, and other important buildings, which are grouped round a large square without a single tree, and called the Batey.

In the centre of this there were about three hundred slaves, men and women, working at the sugar-cane, placing it in the mill, carrying it into the house, and conveying coals for the different steam-engines. To and fro, to and fro, it was a scene of busy life. All this work is done at night, on account of the comparative coolness of the air. As they worked the poor negroes sang

merrily their wild war-songs, which reminded them of their savage African homes, and perhaps of their beloved families. A strong fragrant odour of boiling sugar served to flavour the scene.

I had never seen anything of the kind before, so I was quite taken by surprise, coming so unexpectedly as I had done upon it.

I walked on a little way amongst them to inspect the workers more closely. They looked happy enough, and showed their white teeth, as they attempted to smile, making a half-cunning, half-savage grimace. But another look served to assure me, that what those poor men needed was not so much liberty, as intelligence. They were men in the outward form, but brutes as to their intellect.

And then the question came to me,—“ Why is there such a difference amongst men ? Why is it that we are not all alike ? Surely God is unjust in making some of his children savages and some philosophers ? Why are these things so ? Then, looking into myself, I thought, Why should I be superior to these savages ? What have I done whereby to merit so many privileges ? Why was I created an Englishman, a nobleman, and why were these poor men created negroes, to be bought and sold as slaves ? Surely there is more difference between man and man than between man and beast ? But why are these things so ? Surely God must be just in all His works, and yet—”



As I retraced my steps towards the wood, an old, decrepit, gray-headed negro approached me. I started back as I perceived his white hair, feeble and bare limbs, worn by toil and age, his squalid, lean countenance, and his tottering, fleshless frame. He grasped my hand in his convulsively, and, falling on his knees, he exclaimed,

*“La bendicion mi amo.”* (Your blessing, master.)

I looked at his unmeaning, unintelligent, and yet cunning countenance, and I shuddered. I had seen old men, worn-out, poor, ignorant, before, but never had I seen anything like this poor negro.

*“Su mercé dà medio pa tabacco à negro viejo mi amo?”* (Will your lordship give some money to the poor old negro for tobacco?) he again said in his broken Spanish.

I threw him a dollar, and, escaping from his grasp, I flew back into the wood.

As I entered it I saw Professor Farren, who had been behind me all this time. I turned round and addressed him.

“Doctor,” I exclaimed, “can your philosophy explain that? Can you tell me why I am Lord Carlton and he is a poor savage slave?”

He looked puzzled, but did not answer my question. I looked at him in silence, and, entering the wood, I again walked on, lost in yet deeper meditation.

## XXV.

“La vida es un misterio.”

CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.

“I may not look where cherubim  
And seraphs cannot see;  
But nothing can be good in Him  
Which evil is in me.

“The wrong which pains my soul below  
I dare not throne above:  
I know not of His hate—I know  
His goodness and His love.”

WHITTIER.

“HOWEVER strong, hale, and intelligent, nobleman or slave, born unto wealth and power, or born unto poverty and toil, there is the same fate for all you say—annihilation. Why, then, had we a soul given unto us?—for we have a soul, in spite of your unphilosophical philosophy. . . . If, on the contrary, there is immortality, a future heaven beyond the grave, shall we all be alike rewarded or punished there?”

“Of course, Lord Carlton, or at least so say your priests; the good will be happy for ever, the wicked miserable.”

“And is there no progress after death? . . . .

that negro, will he never become wise as well as good?"

"Your church says, 'As the tree falls, so it will lie.'"

"Impossible! Where would the justice of God be if such were the case? And you, Doctor, what does your philosophy teach you?"

"It teaches only too plainly that there is no after-life. Don't you see now, Lord Carlton, that the doctrines of your church contradict each other in every respect? If you believe in a God at all, you must believe Him to be just; if you believe in immortality, you must believe in eternal progress. All the churches teach you that God is just, and yet that He condemns the greater part of His children to everlasting torments; and those who are saved are not so on account of their good works, but by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only Son sent upon earth to save the world; and those who do not believe in Christ, or who have never heard of Him, will be damned for ever. Where is the sense or the justice of this?"

"I know not! All I can tell you is that this world was not intended for mere eating and drinking, and sinning, as I have seen people do this very evening, which is the natural consequence, after all, of these two alternatives. This is not the only life, Doctor; we are not men for a few days, and dust for ever afterwards; we have not been created for one short existence—

an existence without meaning or result. Neither is it an earth in which we have been placed for the sole purpose that we might believe in certain doctrines whereby alone we can be saved, or, if we do not believe them, sink into hell for evermore. Of this I am convinced. . . . Further I know not. . . . But I will solve the secret. I will unfold the mystery of life. From this day my whole existence will be devoted to the solution of this problem, and I will solve it. I will wrench from death its mysterious secret!"



## XXVI.

“ 'Tis woman that seduces all mankind.”—GAY.

AFTER a few hours' sleep and a refreshing bath the next morning, I was once more myself.

One of the customs to which I never could reconcile myself was to see people come into my room at all hours of the day or night, without so much as knocking to ask permission. As I was dressing that morning in my little apartment, a crowd of negro boys and even men were standing in the garden outside my window, and one of them went so far as to enter the room and to seat himself in a rocking chair placidly smoking his cigar. He looked quite astonished when he saw how displeased I was, but as he hardly understood any Spanish I found it impossible to tell him to go away.

In this country the slaves are treated as children of the house, and I must confess in most houses as spoiled children. They go in or out as they please, and, as far as I could see, work as little as possible; in fact, if they were not made to work I think they would not work at all.

A fact to which I soon got accustomed, but one

which astonished me a great deal at first, is, that the Creoles are infinitely more considerate and humane towards their slaves than are the Europeans, who only remain in the island a short time; be it that the Creoles feel more sympathy towards them, from seeing them toil day after day and year after year by their very side; be it that their patriarchal sort of life extends the paternal care even to the slave; certain it is that the head of each house is not only kind and just, but also less haughty towards his slaves; and while he treats them with all the authority of a master, he also cares for their welfare with all the solicitude of a father. So that instead of seeing in their master a cruel tyrant, they only see in him a kind father, ready to do them every good in his power. The consequences are that they hardly ever revolt against their masters, however discontented they might be with the administrator who rules them in his name. The master's appearance will quiet them at once, and even the most turbulent would fall on their knees and ask him for his blessing.

The European, who takes with him to Cuba the refined ideas of his country, begins by feeling for the slave an exalted pity; from this he passes without any transition to despise his ignorance and stupidity, he gets impatient with the unintelligent savage, and, as the poor negro cannot understand him, he finishes by persuading himself that the negro is but a beast of burden, and

only too often ends by treating him as such, and by beating and ill-using him.

When I made my appearance in the saloon or drawing-room the next morning, I found it already full of people in spite of the early hour. A group of gentlemen were playing cards in a corner of the room just as I had left them the night before, and the thought occurred to me whether they had been playing there all night?

In another corner, standing by the colonnade which opened on the inner garden, were a group of young ladies in muslin dresses, chatting gaily, while they rocked themselves indolently in their respective chairs.

I wondered as I gazed upon them which was Serafina and which was Pilar; which was the deceived girl, and which the deceiving wife!

But I reproached myself when this thought came into my head for having done so. What had I to do with their passions or their crimes? Who was I to meddle in their private affairs? and yet I could not but pity the one and despise the other. I wished I had not heard their conversation the night before, but I had not been able to avoid doing so, and what could I do? it was now too late to regret it, as an interest was already awakened for them in my mind.

It served to teach me, however, that even here, in this gay palace, where all seemed so happy and so unconscious of pain or sorrow, there were

human passions at work, and many mysteries, many intrigues, unknown, but not less dangerous, not less the germs of future sorrow and misery.

But I must not go any further without saying a few words about the beauty of the Cuban ladies.

They are generally of middle height, rather thin than otherwise, with exceedingly small feet and hands, which are their great pride. They hardly ever walk, never in the street, and even when they go out shopping they do not get out of their carriages, but have half the shop brought out for them to choose from ; and yet they are not lazy, they would remain up all night dancing without ever feeling tired ; and they would travel for miles on horseback without fatigue, and enjoy the fun above everything.

They are very white, but their complexions are of the whiteness of ivory, and of a yellowish tint, as if the sun were perpetually shining upon it ; their hair is either of a rich brown or of a still richer black, long and glossy ; they generally dress it in a simple manner, with a rose, or other natural flowers, of which they are passionately fond.

They dress generally in very simple white muslin or tulle dresses, which they, however, only wear while new and clean ; once washed, they are passed over to the slave girls, who, in this way, always look fresh and clean. Their great luxury is in their white silk shoes and stockings, which they also give away when almost new. They



would scorn any other kind of *chaussure*, for the prettiest of Parisian high-heeled boots would be too coarse and too heavy for their delicate and tender feet.

Some of them have beautiful diamonds, mostly set in Madrid or Paris. In the country house where I was now stopping, I remarked some truly magnificent stones ; the Countess of Guanabacoa herself possessing perhaps the handsomest. But the Cuban women possess the greatest of their treasures in their own persons.

Their movements which partake of a voluptuous langour, and their soft and melodious voices, contrast with the extreme vivacity of their physiognomy, and with the rays of fire which escape from their beautiful eyes, through the long and abundant eyelids which veil them.

Such is a Cuban woman—a true daughter of the tropics—passionate yet chaste, beautiful, and yet good and charming, in a moral as well as in a physical point of view.

As soon as they are born, they have a slave girl given to them, who becomes their companion throughout their lives, and who, of course, becomes free as soon as they marry.

Their fathers never consult their own private ends in the union of their daughters, neither are they exhibited for sale as they too often are in England, ready for any proposals, and puffed off by their mothers, until the highest bidder takes

them off their hands. The Cuban girls are engaged at an early age, generally to a relation ; for their parents have a strong objection to mix up their blood, as they call it. The young people are brought up together, and thus, in most cases, their union proves a happy one, for they know each other so well before marriage that they can hardly be disappointed when they mutually discover that they are not the angels they thought each other to be.

After breakfast, which was as long and as important a meal as the dinner had been the day before, the young people again resorted to the ball-room ; and the rest seated themselves once more at their card tables ; indeed, their whole lives seemed to be nothing but a continual round of dancing and gambling from morning till night.

Before leaving the table, however, the Count got up and proposed to his guests to make an excursion on the morrow to a neighbouring coffee estate.

This proposal was received with great acclamations of delight by every one present. And the question was directly put—how shall we go ?

Some proposed we should all go on horseback. This was strongly objected to by the handsome duchess, who sat at the count's right hand.

“Jesus Maria !” she exclaimed, “do you expect me to go on horseback !”

“Oh, no, Duchess,” said our kind host ; “every

one will go as best he pleases. I put my horses and carriages at your disposal, my friends; you can each choose your mode of conveyance."

At first I was rather inclined to remain at Azucena, but my neighbour, Don José Cardenas, assured me that it was quite worth seeing, and said that I was sure to amuse myself.

"By the by," he added, "what do you intend doing this evening?"

"I? nothing that I know of in particular," I answered.

"Ah! then you had better come with me to the *velorio* in the village."

"What on earth is that, Don José?" I asked, surprised by his extraordinary proposal.

"Do not be so thunder-struck, *hombre*," he said. "A rich *guajiro* in the neighbouring village is dead, and there will be a reception at the widow's house to-night before the funeral. This is what is called a *velorio*. Do come." And he added in a low voice, between sarcasm and mystery, "You are sure to amuse yourself."

"But what pleasure can there be in looking at a dead man?"

"You will see when you come. It is one of the customs amongst the lower classes of the island—a very curious one certainly, and one no foreigner should leave unseen. But mind you do not tell any of the fine people in this house

where you are going, for of course they would think it their duty to be shocked."

"Going to watch by a dead man!" I thought, as I left the table; "what pleasure can there be in that! Yet this man seems to think it rather amusing. Some people can discover amusement in everything. At all events, we shall see."



## XXVII.

"In all distresses of our friends,  
We first consult our private ends;  
While Nature, kindly bent to ease us,  
Points out some circumstance to please us."  
—SWIFT (after La Rochefoucauld).

AFTER dinner, we were in the large saloon, which opened, as I have before said, into the inner garden. The Countess, sitting in a rocking-chair by the side of a colossal and rare tropical plant placed in a handsome Sevres vase, was talking with the Duquesa de Miranda, who always needed some one to amuse her, and who could only talk about her absent son, who was now making a grand tour in Europe, after having completed his education at Beaumont College, Windsor; as his devoted mama proudly informed every one.

The Count was, with a few other friends, talking with the reverend old chaplain whilst they smoked their Havanas; and I was in the centre of a gay group round the piano, composed of the youngest portion of the party, listening to some beautiful Spanish songs, and chatting of one thing and another, till the lights would be lighted

in the ball-room, and the real business of the night might begin.

Presently the bell of the little chapel sang out the melodious chimes of the *Oracion*, or vesper, for it was already eight o'clock ; and then all conversation suddenly ceased as if by magic ; the greater part of the visitors stood, whilst a few knelt down, all lost in silent prayer.

Then I felt the pressure of a hand upon my shoulder, and, turning round, I recognised my friend Don José, who, with a slight movement of his eyes, and an unmistakeable expression of his face, bade me follow him out of the room.

I understood the meaning of this, so I followed him in silence, not only out of the room, but out of the house.

We traversed the terraces and gardens, and soon found ourselves in the cane-fields, which we crossed one after another. A short walk brought us at last to the village of Corral Falso.

This we found to be a pretty little place of about 1400 inhabitants, belonging in its greater part to the Count, as my friend told me. In the centre is situated the church, surrounded by a square planted with trees, round which are grouped the principal buildings, the barracks, the bank, the theatre, &c. The streets are straight, and cut each other at right angles, as indeed all the streets in the island do.

We saw some good shops as we passed, but we

did not stop to examine anything, as we were late already.

Every house has a rustic verandah in front, most of them built of wood, but some with stone pillars. These were gaily decorated with palm-leaves and flags, in honour of the patron saint of the Countess, (Santa Catalina) who is also the patroness of the village, and some of the houses exhibited great taste in their decorations.

At last we arrived at the dead man's house, situated near the railway station, and surrounded by trees. I saw at a glance that this house was about the best in the place; and calculated therefore that the dead man must have been very rich, although only a *guajiro*.

As we entered the saloon, which opened into the verandah, unpreceded by any hall, a new and extraordinary sight met our eyes. The room was full of people, and brilliantly lighted. In the centre, raised to a considerable height on a black velvet catafalque, or funeral canopy, lay the dead man surrounded by a hundred torches, which threw a ghastly light over his livid features. In front of the bier there was a large silver cross and a priest on his knees praying.

In a corner of the room, surrounded by her children and family, was the widow, dressed in black; she did not cry, but her eyes were red, and showed signs of recent tears. On her knees her youngest boy was playing with a little negro

of his own age, ignorant of the loss he had sustained.

This melancholy spectacle was most decidedly not to my friend's taste, so, after bowing low to the widow, he hurried as fast as he could across the room, to the other part of the house which lay behind it. I followed him as fast I could, for this sad scene revived too vividly remembrances in my mind that were seldom absent from it. As we passed the corpse, however, I could not but cast a glance at it. There it lay in all its funeral pomp and splendour, and around it were grouped a few devoted slaves, who still clung to their lost master. Why was he dead? Why had that man become a cold corpse all at once? What is death? ay! and more still, what is life? Can this man be dead? dead for ever? Can he have gone to a distant heaven, forgetting his family, his wife—all his earthly ties and loves? Will his new home be heaven to him when he recollects what he has left behind?

All these thoughts rushed into my mind before I could recover myself from the ghastly sight, and I turned sick and faint, and would have fallen to the ground, if Don José had not taken me by the arm and forced me out of the room.

The cool air of the court-yard revived me, and with a firm step I entered the saloon beyond, with the determination to drive all such sad thoughts out of my burning head.



Here a scene of a totally different character met our eyes. This room, which was smaller than the first, was crowded with people of all ages and stations, who formed various animated groups around it; the youngest played at *loto*, and at dominoes, at a side-table; and their laughter and gay talk was heard all over the room. The older portion of the guests were seated at another table on the opposite side, busily engaged with a good supper, and scarcely less gay; whilst in the centre a third group, composed of the old maids of the village and a few priests, were listening to the merits, riches, and particulars of the illness of their dead host, and speculating on the amount he had left for his family, as his worldly goods were enumerated in detail by an old housekeeper, who smiled through her tears, and, as any one could see, was quite in her glory, at being listened to with so much attention by all the *comadres* and *compadres* of the village; who, I suppose generally, had too much to say of their own, to listen to any one else's gossip.

Don José turned round and smiled at me, as we entered the gay apartment and this animated scene met our eyes, but I turned mine away in disgust. I cannot tell which of the two scenes seemed to me at the time the most melancholy, whether the sad sorrow of the former, or the disgusting mockery of the latter.

All I know is, that at that moment I hated poor Don José for having brought me to such a place, and without another word I left the house and returned, as fast as I could, to the sugar estate; but not without losing my way in the dark cane-fields more than once, and leaving portions of my coat in the wild cactus and prickly hedges.

## XXVIII.

“ All is of God ! If He but wave His hand,  
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,  
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,  
Lo ! He looks back from the departing cloud.

“ Angels of life and death alike are His ;  
Without His leave they pass no threshold o'er ;  
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,  
Against His messengers to shut the door ? ”

LONGFELLOW.

My room in the Ingenio Acucena was, as I have said before, on the ground floor, below the terraces, and opening into the garden, from which I could enter it without going through the rest of the house.

To this room I repaired when I reached the house. Too much pained and disgusted with what I had seen to enjoy the gay society of Lady Leigh and her friends that evening, I shut myself up in my apartment, and was soon lost in meditation.

“ How uncertain is life ! ” I thought ; “ how certain death ! and yet how little do people trouble themselves about either the one or the other—they take it as a matter of course ; and perhaps that is the true way, after all, of viewing the subject, the real meaning of which we cannot

understand. It is the most philosophical way, at all events, and yet there is something in the subject that attracts and fascinates me with its mournful spell, and absorbs my thoughts so much that it allows me to think of little else besides ; life seems to me as nought by the side of death.

“All my sympathies, all my love, lie on the other side of the grave ; my father, my mother, my wife, all the friends of my youth, have passed away from me ; and yet I feel for them just as I did when they were still on earth. Can death be annihilation, as Professor Farren tries to prove ?

“Reason teaches us that vice, crime, wickedness, deserve punishment and expiation ; and that virtue, goodness, faith, deserve in the same way reward and happiness. The ancient Egyptian philosophers, and Moses after them, thought thus. They therefore based their laws and commandments upon this foundation. The old dispensation teaches us to do good in order that we may be happy here, and to fear the immediate consequences of evil. The rewards and the punishment both pertain only to this life. “Honour thy father and thy mother, *that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*” But is this always the case ? On the contrary, experience soon teaches us that fortune, in nine cases out of ten, favours the wicked. How often do we see the ill-doer not only live unpunished, but even, as the conse-



quence of his crimes, obtain a large fortune, with worldly honours and power, and after long years spent in perfect happiness, die respected by all men, and blessed by many; whilst the honest man, on the contrary, whose virtuous scruples, and love of justice and goodness, divide him from fortune and friends, lives but to be laughed at and scorned; and only too often dies forgotten and calumniated.

“The newer revelation still holds out for the wicked the same fear of punishment, and for the righteous the promise of reward, happiness, and glory; but removes both beyond the grave, to another world, which is to be the sequel of this; and in which the wrong-doer shall meet his punishment, and the right-doer his reward.

“And this is quite a rational belief, and one which we must accept, if we hold God to be just and merciful, as we do. It is well for those who deny the existence of a God to deny also the immortality of the soul; but those who believe in one must necessarily believe in the other, as the natural consequence of the first belief.

“But at the same time that the justice of the law requires expiation, it also must need this expiation to be only proportionate to the gravity of the infraction. The fault requires a punishment, but one equal to it, neither greater nor less; at least this is the law of justice. The more I have exceeded the standard in the quantity of

my food, the more dangerous and painful will be the indigestion, which is the natural consequence of over-eating. But the reaction can only last as long as the effects of the action. If the sinner recognise his errors, and correct them ; if he sin no more, the law being no longer violated, the nature of things being no longer out of divine order, the retributive action can no longer take place ; because the violating cause is already at an end.

“The same reasoning, therefore, that proves to us the necessity of future rewards and punishments in another life, proves also that those rewards and punishments must be in exact accordance with the good or bad deeds here committed. The punishments could, therefore, only be eternal, if it were possible to find a being eternally wicked, eternally in opposition to God’s law. And then only, would eternal punishment be just. But this cannot be, for *pain*, the greatest of educators, must necessarily do its work, and end by opening the eyes of the most obstinate.

“But if we believe that in that other life, the happiness or misery of which is but the consequence of this, we can yet repent of our sins and attain unto virtue, would this not prove that there must be progress in that other life ?

“The more I think of this, the clearer it seems to me. Our life upon earth may be summed up

in one word, *progress*; can this progress stop in the grave? For this to be the case, our natures must necessarily undergo a total change, for our present nature is progressive, and if we were to change our nature with our body, should we not also change our identity, and become a totally different being?"

As my thoughts wandered on, ever meditating on this endless and fruitful subject, I felt myself gradually losing consciousness of the scene around me. I lay with my arms folded over my writing table, and my head lying heavily upon them; by degrees I lost all consciousness in sleep.

I cannot tell how long I may have slept, but I had a dream, a long fascinating dream, that might have lasted hours, for so it seemed to me. I saw angels floating around me, bright orbs of light, and sweet melodious music, sweeter, and more intense in its power than any I had ever heard before, sounded in my ear, and I saw Conchita in the midst of clouds and rainbows, radiant with light and harmony, her golden hair forming a brilliant halo around her angel face.

But it was only a dream, the wild, incoherent, but happy dream of a lover; and when I awoke, I was sorry it was so soon over.

But what was my astonishment when I moved, to see upon the table over which I had been leaning, a piece of paper covered with some unknown characters, to me unintelligible. How came





## XXIX.

“Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act—act in the living Present!  
Heart within and God o'er head!”

LONGFELLOW.

THE next day was Tuesday, which on this estate is kept as Sunday, and no work whatever is done.

In certain districts of the island where, like this, many estates join each other, it has been found necessary to chose a different day of rest for each one, in order that the negroes of one should not meet and mix with those of another.

In this way each estate has a Sunday of its own, and is able to maintain its negroes and its coolies free from any contamination which might prove dangerous to both proprietors; for one can never be sure of the behaviour of savages.

I spent the whole of the morning in my room, trying to decipher the curious cryptogram I had so mysteriously received the previous evening; but all my endeavours proved useless; I showed it to Professor Farren, and others, no one knew where it came from, and what is more, no one cared. But I, at least, could not but feel intensely interested in its interpretation. Could it really have come from another world?

My little apartment, which I do not think I have yet described, and of which I was beginning to get particularly fond, was rather a small room, although very lofty ; it had two window-doors which opened, as I think I have already said, into the lower garden ; these windows, like all I have seen in Cuba, were totally unfurnished with glass, but were provided with venetian blinds, which opened and shut from the inside, and had massive shutters of Cedarwood for the night, which, however, I never found it necessary to close, for the weather was warm, and as far as insects of any kind were concerned, I saw none that could trouble me.

On the opposite side to these windows, and facing them, was a large door which opened into a corridor or gallery, into which several other rooms also opened. Besides this door, which was of solid mahogany, there was an inside door which only reached to the middle of the doorway, thus permitting a free circulation of air, and which was entirely constructed of polished mahogany venetian blinds. This second door was for the warm weather, when the larger one always stood wide open, for a constant draught is almost necessary ; and yet a door of some kind is also desirable to insure privacy and comfort.

The floor was of white and green marble, arranged in a geometrical pattern. The walls were white as usual, excepting the coloured

border round the lower part, which was of pretty little tiles in the Moorish style. The ceiling was of painted wood, resembling polished mahogany, at least so it seemed to me from below.

The bed was, of course, a true Creole one, without any mattresses or blankets of any kind ; a couple of sheets and pillows, with a silk coverlet, forming its entire furniture. But these were indeed luxurious in the extreme ; they had a deep lace all round, and above this a fine embroidery in floss silk, of the most vivid colours. They were besides starched in such a way that it was as much as I could do to keep them over me at night, they were so slippery.

The Cuban ladies are very proud of their linen, which they embroider and trim with as much lace as they possibly can, all which work is done at home by the slave girls ; even the towels are richly embroidered in various colours, and surrounded by lace ; but as they also, like the sheets, are starched until they become as stiff as paper, they are almost useless, for directly one puts them to one's face, all the starch comes out upon it.

This fancy of starching everything to such a ridiculous degree is, to my taste, a very disagreeable one. I remember once my things came from the laundress, starched all over, and so stiff, that I could scarcely put them on.

A writing-table, a dressing-table, a wardrobe,

and a few cane chairs, completed the furniture of my room, together with a marble slab with silver basin, to which there were tubes of hot and cold water attached, in the American style.

Our much talked-of excursion to the neighbouring coffee estate was to take place on the afternoon of this day, which was to amuse us, and pass the time previous to the great feast of the morrow, when we were to celebrate the great day.

Almost all the guests formed part of the excursion, so we were a very large party. All the Count's carriages and horses were put in requisition, and many were obliged to hire conveyances from the village. There were carriages of all kinds—from the native volanta to the English drag—from the elegant barouche of the Countess, to the dog-cart of the Administrator. Many went on horseback, I amongst them; and Lady Leigh would also have joined us if she had had her habit with her, but unfortunately she had left it behind her in Washington.

We were soon *en route*, the volantas and carriages in front, while we rode behind, cantering over the fresh grass which grew on either side.

The road was very narrow—so much so, that the carriages had to follow each other in single file—but it was a lovely road, although rather rough, lined with cane-fields, and often passing through woods of plantain and orange-trees, the thick branches of which ensured a cool shade over



the hot road, filling it with their sweet perfume. Here and there a lofty palm or cactus spoke to us of the tropics, whilst large high ceibas, the only tree which amongst all this grand vegetation ever loses its leaves, reminded us of the advanced season of the year which the oranges and bananas on the other trees might easily have made us forget.

Gaily we rode along, some jesting and others flirting with the ladies, and talking to those in the carriages, when presently the one in which Lady Leigh was sitting, and which happened to be the first, stopped. Of course the whole procession of carriages had to halt also. I, and several others, rode on to see the cause of the stoppage; we found that one of the reins had got loose, and the postillion had dismounted to set it to rights. I was talking to her, and asking her how she enjoyed the drive, when all of a sudden, the horses taking fright, dashed off down the road before them, full gallop, leaving the dismounted postillion and all of us, thunder-struck in the middle of the road.

Lilian gave a scream as she flew past me, and, as I thought, fainted.

Then began a race as if for life; everybody thought it his duty to gallop after the runaway volanta; so on we went, helter-skelter, one after the other, horses and carriages, as hard as we could down the straight road.

To no one did it occur that this wild chase would only frighten the runaway horses all the more ; on we went as fast as we could tear, down one hill and up another, till at last I began to think the race would never end.

My horse fortunately was a very good one—a thorough-bred, of English extraction, belonging to the Count—so I was not afraid for myself ; and the idea struck me that if I could jump over the hedge and gallop through one of the fields, I might cut off an angle, and arrive at the turn of the road before the runaway volanta.

I did so without much difficulty, and two others followed my example ; but not even this seemed to be of much use, for the horses, more frightened than ever, galloped faster than we could do, so we were always behind them, and seemed to gain but little ground.

A large forest of palms, surrounded by bamboos and cactuses, was now in front of us, forming the end of the fields, and dividing the two estates. Our only chance, therefore, was to arrive there before the carriage ; for if not, we would probably have to lament a catastrophe, for it would inevitably be dashed against the trees before the horses could make their way through the thick branches, out into the open country on the other side.

We galloped harder than ever ; I do not think I have ever ridden so fast before ; trees and fields seemed to cross my eyes before I could even

look at them. But my horse was in front now. I was gaining ground, and, out of breath, I arrived at last at the edge of the forest. I looked up ; the carriage was behind, although the horses, covered with foam, seemed as if they would rush on me.

I made a last effort, and jumped over the cactus hedge, running the risk of killing my good horse, and perhaps breaking my neck ; but I was excited, and thought of nothing at that moment but of saving the lady if possible.

I landed at the other side of the hedge just as the volanta was passing ; the horses, startled at seeing me all at once in the middle of the road, stopped ; and one of them, stepping on a stone, fell down heavily, bringing the carriage down upon him, for these vehicles have no fore wheels whereon to rest.

I jumped down from my horse and received Lilian Leigh in my arms, just as the sudden stoppage of the carriage pitched her forward upon the road.

### XXX.

“Umile in tanta gloria.”

PETRARCH.

I HELD her in my arms, I pressed her against my heart. There she lay insensible ; her beautiful hair, escaped from the one comb that confined it, hung loosely over her brow ; her dress was in disorder. Beautiful !—ah ! she was beautiful as she thus lay, light as a feather, near my beating heart !

For one moment my head swam round. I saw nothing but those heavenly features and that perfect form. I felt my heart beat, and my reason give way. I felt drawn towards her by a force I was unable to resist. A cold shiver ran through my whole frame—and, leaning forward, I pressed my burning lips against those cold, pale lips of hers !

A shock ran through me. I turned round, and, to my dismay, I saw all the party grouped behind me, ladies and gentlemen, servants and slaves, there they all were ! They must have seen my involuntary, my insane action !

I felt ready to sink into the ground.

At that moment I would have given worlds



not to have been the one who had thus saved her. Every one, of course, offered me their compliments and their congratulations. They might have seen the kiss, but if they did, they were discreet enough to keep it to themselves, for they said nothing about it to me. I, however, could not forget it, and I am afraid I must have presented the most ridiculous picture in the moment of my triumph.

Lilian soon recovered, and came back to her senses. Mrs Herbert, the Countess, and all the other ladies, inundated her with eau-de-cologne, and even the handsome Duchess stepped out of the barouche and presented her with her jewelled vinaigrette.

As soon as she learnt who had saved her, she came towards me, her bright blue eyes sparkling amidst her tears.

"Lord Carlton," she said, putting her small hand on mine, "you have been twice my deliverer. This is the second time I owe my life to you. Is there no way in which a poor helpless woman like me can reward your courage and"—looking tenderly at me, she whispered—"your affection?"

"We must crown him," suggested some one behind me.

The strain was taken up immediately by all—

"Yes, we must crown him!"

"Lilian should crown her deliverer!"

"He deserves to be crowned!"

“El Caballero Campeador !”

“Beauty should reward her preserver !”  
was shouted on all sides. Lilian lifted her eyes once more till they met mine.

“You see, Lord Carlton,” she whispered, “I have to crown you. Will you accept *this* from my hands ?”

Of course I was obliged to submit ; and a few seconds afterwards the young ladies had twined a crown of laurel-leaves and orange-flowers, which they presented to Lilian.

I knelt down at her feet, while she placed the crown on my head.

“Sir Knight,” she said; “be for ever faithful and brave !”

These words were followed by great shouts and acclamations of applause. Our names were coupled together, and even the handsome Duchess of Miranda forgot her absent son, and complimented me on my beautiful intended, as now every one pleased to call Lilian Leigh.

The congratulations were now put a stop to, and the general group was dispersed by the Count, who said in his usual kind and considerate way, “Now, my friends, we must make haste. We have lost too much time already, and Don Juan is waiting for us at his cafetal.”

We were near the gates of the coffee estate to which we were going, so a drive of a few minutes brought us to our destination.

We advanced through the *guarda-raya*, a stately avenue of palm-trees leading to the house.

Nothing can possibly equal the beauty of the scene which now surrounded us. On either side of the avenue, and extending for miles all around, were the coffee-fields, now in full blossom, in spite of the early season of the year. As far as the eye could reach was a vast sea of enormous green shrubs, whose branches, mingling with one another, covered the entire superficies of the rich red soil, whilst, scattered over this sea of green, the beautiful white blossoms of the coffee looked like millions of snowdrops hanging in thick bunches, clustering closely around each stem.

Over the ever-green coffee-plants waved high in air, casting a cool shadow upon them, cotton-plants, plantain and banana trees, cocoa-nut, Indian laurel, cedar, orange, fig, lemon, tamarind, and other tropical trees; for nature seemed indeed to have been prodigal of her bounties to this favoured land.

And now we arrived at the residence, a large, two-floored house, situated in the middle of the *Batey*,—for a coffee estate has also its *Batey*, the same as a sugar estate, consisting, in this case, of *tendales* or store-houses, *secaderos* or large stone squares, for drying the coffee in the sun, pumping-mill (*molino de pila*), *Barracon* or barracks for the negroes, hospital, *casa de vivienda* (residence),



and a hundred other buildings, all grouped together around a large square.

Behind the house were the gardens, extensive and beautiful, as they always are in Cuba, full of statues, fountains, and summer-houses, and offering a cool shade during the hottest hours of the day.

Don Juan Aguilas, the master of the house, came out to receive us, and politely offered us his house in the true Castilian fashion, "*Esta casa está á la disposicion de ustedes, señores.*"

We partook of refreshments in the garden, under the orange and lemon trees, and after this the more mature amongst us sat down about the gardens to converse, whilst the rest walked through the gardens and shrubberies, and the more practical retired to the *Batey*, to inspect the machinery and study the process of cultivating and making coffee.

I joined them, quitting the gay society of the fair ones, and went with them deep into the particulars of this highly interesting manufactory, which I must confess was Greek to me ; but I did this in order to avoid the repeated congratulations and tender looks of Lilian, and the gossip and sly jokes of the young ladies, who had witnessed my unfortunate kiss ; so rashly, so foolishly bestowed.

I was not sorry therefore, when, later in the afternoon, we returned to the sugar estate. I



rode back as I had come, but kept behind with the men, and abstained from any communication with Lilian or the other ladies.

The evening was spent as usual, in gambling, dancing, and music, but I retired early to my room, and soon a quiet sleep made me oblivious, for the time, to what I considered the unfortunate and disagreeable events of the day.

## XXXI.

“La ilusion que se sueña hechiza el alma,  
La ilusion que se toca . . . hace llorar.”

UNPUBLISHED POEM.

THE next day was the feast of Santa Catalina, the patroness of the village, as also the saint of our kind hostess, the Countess of Guanabacoa.

In the morning there was a review of the soldiers and volunteers, which took place in the square in front of the house, from the marble balconies of which we enjoyed a beautiful view of the whole proceedings.

The uniform of the volunteers is picturesque as well as suited to the climate. It consists of coats and trowsers of white and blue striped linen, turned over and trimmed with scarlet, high boots, and large straw hats, with a red and yellow ribbon and cockade (Spanish colours) round it.

They are fine men, and looked quite soldier-like as they galloped on their fine steeds before the house.

The Spanish soldiers also looked very well in their linen uniforms. Their dress was quite new to me, for in Spain, of course, it is very different; but I do think a great deal of good sense as well

as taste has been displayed in this, for the climate is a great deal too hot to wear regular uniforms of heavy cloth as they do in Europe.

But I could not help shuddering as I beheld those poor soldiers, the greater part of them very young men, sent out to die in this distant land, victims of its tropical climate, far away from their homes and families.

Oh Spain! it is only with the blood of thy children thou canst keep the finest colony which is now left thee, of the once colossal transatlantic empire, that once owned thy sway.

In the afternoon we all repaired to the village, to attend the grand procession, for which so many preparations had been made.

It was late before we arrived there, the sun had already gone down, and as there is no twilight in the tropics, the many illuminations showed to the greatest advantage.

We went to the doctor's house, from whence, those who did not walk in the procession, were to see it pass.

An hour more elapsed however, before it reached the street in which this house was situated, which hour we passed in talking, laughing, eating sweatmeats, and taking ices and cool beverages.

We were in the great verandah in front of the house, which had been carpeted and hung with silk damask, and decorated with palm leaves and

large banners, on which were painted the wheel of martyrdom, being the celestial arms of St Catherine.

Mrs Herbert, Lady Leigh, Professor Farren, and many others were sitting before a large table which had been placed there temporarily, eating strawberries and guayavas, whilst on the other side of the verandah was a group of ladies discussing the dresses, jewels, and miraculous power of the Image whose feast we were celebrating.

"Have you seen the dress, Nieves?" asked an old lady of a pretty little brunette, who sat by her side.

"No, I believe it only arrived yesterday, but it must be very beautiful; just fancy, it is of gold brocade, and embroidered with pearls, real pearls, I believe."

"The Countess has lent her her jewels, I have heard," said another.

"Indeed," suggested an old maid, the lady companion of the Duchess of Miranda, known as Doña Eulalia, who believed herself to be the great wit of the party, "I fancy she would not give them to her."

"But she is very pious, nevertheless, and has a great devotion for the saint," said another.

"Then," muttered Doña Eulalia, "she should buy her jewels of her own. An Image such as this should have diamonds like a queen."



"Do you believe all they say about her miracles?" said an old beau, with a grin.

"Well, I do not know if I do quite," answered the old lady who had first spoken; "of course, they must stand up for the merits of their patroness."

"Ah, if she were like my *Virgen de la Consolacion*! that is indeed a miraculous image," said the old beau, with a look of triumph.

"Have you a miraculous image of your own, Don Matias?" broke in one of the young ladies, as she threw a sweetmeat to one of the little negroes in the street below.

"Ah yes, and such a virgin! '*tiene cara de cielo.*' It came direct from heaven, and was found by an old negress in one of my fields. Of course, I gave her her freedom directly."

The old maid smiled maliciously. "Ah, Don Matias," she said, "if you offer freedom to every slave who discovers an image, you would soon have them all coming in with saints and virgins, *all dropped from heaven*, of course."

"Jesus-Maria, what a sacrilege," exclaimed one of the young ladies.

"How dare you hint such a thing, Doña Eulalia," said another.

"Well, well, my dear Eduardo," she answered coolly, not seeming to mind this general outburst of indignation, "such things *have* taken place before now."

"Oh fie, fie!"

"Ignorant superstitions!" muttered Professor Farren, turning away in disgust from the group, to whose conversation we had been listening.

Lady Leigh now called my attention in another direction. "Are you going to the great ball on board the 'Numancia,' next Saturday?" she said.

"I did not know there was going to be one," I answered; "I have not been invited."

"Oh, General Herbert will soon get you an invitation, if you would like to go. But I suppose you do not care for such trivial amusements. I see you always fight shy of our pretty ball-room at Azucena, which you so seldom favour with your presence."

She said this in a careless way, but I knew that she meant it as a reproach, but what could I say? It was only too true; I did fight shy, as she called it, of the gay *cage* in which she danced merrily away half the night, and yet I could give no excuse for this. I could not tell her openly that I dreaded her society.

"It will be a very grand affair," she continued, seeing I did not answer her first proposition. "The Numancia is the finest of the Spanish men-of-war, and then a ball on board ship is always interesting, even for those who do not dance."

"You are mistaken, Lady Leigh, I do dance sometimes; indeed I used to be very fond of it

once, but since my wife's death I have lost all my spirits."

"I know what it is, Lord Carlton!" she said, with a sigh. "I know what it is to lose one's companion, one's love. I was inconsolable for months after the loss of my darling George, and even now I often feel lonely and sad. . . . Ah! if I had a child, just a little boy who would call me 'Mamma,' and remind me of him I so loved. Ah! Lord Carlton, how happy you must think yourself, to have a little angel to cherish and pet. I who am so fond of children have been denied one."

"I did not know you were fond of children, Lady Leigh?"

"You used to call me Lilian once; you know people wonder here why you call me Lady Leigh, for, as you see, it is the fashion here to call one another by one's Christian name, except, perhaps, total strangers; but we can hardly be called so, after the months we have travelled together, and the adventures we have gone through. I hope, at least, you do not consider me as a stranger, do you Carlton?"

She said this in such a sweet artless way that, of course, I could not remonstrate.

As I have said before, since the fatal night of the fire at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, a coolness had sprung up between us, a coolness which neither of us dared to break, we had therefore not seen

much of each other during the last two months ; but the accident of the day before had again thrown us in each other's way, and to-night, for the first time, we found ourselves indulging in a little flirtation in a corner of the doctor's verandah, overlooking the main street of the little village of Corral Falso.

"How is your little boy called ?"

"Raphael."

"Raphael !" she repeated, laying a soft strain on the word, "Raphael Carlton, what a sweet name ; how fond you must be of him, the little angel !"

How little she knows, I thought, what I really feel for the poor boy ! I suppose it was very wrong, but really at that time I could not bring myself to love him. His life was still coupled in my mind with his mother's death.

"You will come to the ball on Saturday, now, won't you ? Uncle Farren will not go, so you will chaperon me ; I am sure you will enjoy it, once there ; everybody is going from here, the Countess and all. She has invited me to go and stop with her at her town house in Havana. Is it not kind of her ? It is such a beautiful house, quite a palace, and they receive lots of company, so I think I shall enjoy my visit."

"And Mrs Herbert, will you leave her ?"

"Well, she is very kind, and all that, but to tell you the truth I am rather tired of her and



her American friends ; a private home is so much nicer than an hotel. I cannot imagine how they like to live always in an hotel amongst people they do not know."

"It is an American fashion," I said, "which some people find rather convenient."

"Some Americans, but not all ; you know, between ourselves, Carlton, the Herberts, although very kind and hospitable, are not of the best society ; in fact, I do not think it would be proper for me to visit them at home."

"I did not know such differences existed between Americans. I thought in a Republic all were equal."

"Oh no, thank God ! we are not yet fallen so low. We too, although Republicans, have ancient families amongst us, although, unfortunately, they are not distinguished by any title of nobility, as they would be in Europe. My family for instance, is a very old one, descended, I believe, from some nobleman's second son who came to America long long ago. I do not know exactly how it was, but I know the Robinsons were titled people in England."

I could not help smiling at the fair widow's ancient pedigree.

"Your name is so pretty," she continued, "it must be a very old one, it sounds quite classical. Oh, I know all about you, Carlton, through the peerage you know !"

A merry chime of bells from the little church now announced that the procession was coming out, and all our eyes were directed to that end of the street at which it would first make its appearance. Of course the whole party stood up to see it pass.

## XXXII.

“ C’est le cœur qui sent Dieu, et non la raison. Voilà ce que c’est que la foi ; la religion sensible au cœur non à la raison.”

PASCAL.

DoÑA EULALIA and her party left the little table round which they had been eating the delicious fruits of the tropics ; and took their places in front of the verandah. Lilian and I also joined them ; and even Professor Farren condescended to lean forward to behold the *ignorant superstitions* ; as he persisted in calling them, of the good inhabitants of Corral Falso.

Below our balcony the dense crowd of people were grouped as thick as they could be ; and a motley and merry sight those men of so many different faiths and climates presented, all collected together in the narrow street to see the procession of Santa Catalina. Negroes from Africa, Chinamen from Peking and Canton, American citizens from the States, Peruvians and Brazilians from South America, Englishmen from Liverpool or London, Catalonians from Barcelona, Castillians from Madrid, Andalusians from fair Seville, Italians from Rome and Naples. There they all were, side by side, in the little street

below us, meeting each other for the first time, and perhaps for the last, in a little unknown village of the West Indies, where they had come to make their fortunes or . . . to die.

But now the procession was approaching, the crowd moved like the waves of the sea to and fro, while the brilliant light of the many torches showed here a Panama hat, there a European bonnet; a little further the bright red handkerchief of some negro woman; at last the procession came in sight.

Four mounted policemen rode first, to open the way through the great crowd, which had been congregating in the streets all day from all the villages round.

Then came a long line of priests and acolytes, bearing standards and crosses; these were followed by about forty little children dressed as angels, with feathered wings, and a few as St John the Baptist in miniature, with little lambs in their arms, or walking by their side. As they passed through the street, flowers and bon-bons were showered upon them from the ladies in the different balconies.

The parish priest came next, under a golden canopy, in full ecclesiastical costume, and immediately behind followed the saint herself.

The image was carried on a golden car, surrounded by lighted tapers, and upon her was also thrown an electric light, so that she stood out in



conspicuous relief, and blazed like fire amidst the darkening shades of the evening.

She wore a rich brocade dress, which had come from Spain on purpose for that day; but this dress was so covered with jewels (lent to her by the Countess and the other ladies, for the occasion), that it was hardly visible.

As the image of Santa Catalina passed, all went down on their knees.

Behind the saint walked the Count and Countess, with many other ladies and gentlemen, each bearing a lighted taper, and behind these again came the band, which played a solemn march all the time.

This was followed by the soldiers and volunteers; the latter on horseback closing the procession.

The sight was really impressive; although simple enough, and poor, compared with the gorgeous displays of Rome and Seville; but it had a certain air of devotion and piety, that pleased me much.

The great ceremonials of the Catholic Church have been accused of deluding and robbing the spectators of their faith—"the pageant," they say, "supersedes the piety, when men come to see a *pantomime* they will look at nothing but the tricks."

This I cannot believe, I have lived much in Catholic countries, and I have always seen with real pleasure, the veneration and faith, that such

an exhibition as this generally extracts from the mob, for whom it is intended. It is very well for a northern people, like the English or Scotch, to content themselves with a purely spiritual religion; but the warm imaginative natures of the children of the sun need something that will not only strike the eye, but warm the heart, and make it throb with emotion for the holy mysteries of their faith.

You cannot change the time-honoured customs of a nation, any more than you can change the natures of its children—it is part of themselves.

The Latin races have, from time immemorial, delighted in beholding images, and witnessing processions. The descendants of the old Druids, whose worship was more mental than material, can pray without any visible shrine; but the children of Rome and Greece must still behold upon their altars the representative image or picture of some god or saint. As I have tried to prove in "*The Honeymoon*," *each religion is the true one for him by whom it is received*. No one can change the religious belief of a nation, for this belief is not a thing appertaining to the mind, which you can argue out of it, or change with a certain amount of reasoning. Our religious sentiments, like our ideas of God, are deeply seated in our hearts, where no philosophy and no reasoning can reach them. In our hearts we are always the same, whatever we may outwardly pretend to be; and those who change their religion,

do so, because in their hearts they never believed in their former faith at all ; or because they have outgrown their former feelings in the course of their progress.

I know Protestants, who are in their hearts Catholics, and Catholics who are Protestants ; it is the fault of their *minds*, not of their *hearts*, if they do not change their exterior worship at once, and overcoming all obstacles declare themselves Catholics or Protestants as the case may be.

“Image worship,” says the Protestant, “makes the idea of Deity ridiculous. Rational men despise a God that is made by a carpenter.” Now this is not true ; what Catholic ever worshipped the actual wooden image ? It is that which it represents that we really worship, not the mere representation. “The *perpetual* use of sacred things and terms, which is the necessary habit of superstition,” I have heard them say, “renders them too familiar.” Ah ! I only wish they were still more familiar to the greater part of mankind ! What better example could men have constantly before them, than the glorious pages of the life of Jesus, and of the saints ?

The sufferings of Christ will teach them how to suffer, and conquer death. The images of Mary will give them a wholesome example of what a wife and a mother should be ; the pictorial representation of her sorrows will give them hope and encouragement ; the pictures of the saints



and martyrs constantly before their eyes, will give them a nobler and a higher view of life and its responsibilities, than the mere routinal singing of psalms.

When the image of St Catherine passed through the principal street of the pretty little village of Corral-Falso, midst flowers, and jewels, music, and lighted tapers, how many hearts did it not move, and inspire with a holier and more Christian aspiration than they had had before ! There was an example before their very eyes of the success of holiness and goodness ; if St Catherine had attained to such a high position and to so much honour, through her good deeds, her pure heart, and her holy faith, why should they not also follow her example, and try to reach the same elevation ?

I am sure this passed through many a heart in that little street ; and it was with piety and veneration that they lowered their heads, Africans, and Chinamen, Englishmen and Spaniards, before that *wooden image* of the martyred saint.

But what is the use of discussing any more ! No amount of reasoning will ever convert a Protestant ; and the Catholics, I am sure, do not need any of my arguments to convince them of the beauty and poetry of their religion—of which, however, I am the first to denounce the many faults and errors, as I am the first to stand up for its eternal truths.



### XXXIII.

“ And slight, withal, may be the things which bring  
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling  
Aside for ever.”—BYRON.

THE next day we all left the Ingenio de la Azucena, and returned to the Havana.

I, to my rooms at the Hotel San Carlos, with the Consul and Mrs Herbert ; and Lady Leigh to the Palacio de Guanabacoa with the Count and Countess, who had invited her to stop with them.

I was not sorry for this separation, for since the unlucky accident at the Cafetal, I almost dreaded the fair widow's society ; and some reports had been circulated lately, (not without her tacit assent, I think, if all were known), which coupled our names together more than I should have desired.

Some even asked me when I intended to marry her, which was exceedingly annoying and disagreeable.

For, what excuse could I give for not doing so ? She was beautiful and rich—a widow, and certainly no one ever questioned her unspotted reputation or the sweetness of her character. And yet, the more I saw of her, the less I liked her,

for the more I was convinced of her frivolity and her flightiness. She was a beautiful butterfly with the most brilliant wings, who flitted from flower to flower, extracting from them all the sweetness she could, and yet giving nothing in return. How could I ever love such a woman, after the perfect wife I had so recently lost ?

The ball on board the *Numancia* was to take place that evening. From my balcony in the hotel I had watched for days, before going to the country, the various preparations which had been going on in the Bay for the great occasion. This grand ball was the subject of all conversations, the all-absorbing topic of the day.

At last the long looked for evening had arrived, and that night was to find a thousand hopes realised, and a thousand fears ended.

I was to call at the palace of the Count de Guanabacoa for Lady Leigh and the Countess, whom I was to escort to the ball. I therefore did so about ten ; and with them I drove back to the side of the town adjoining the bay.

At the Machina, which is the wharf and landing-place for the men-of-war's boats, we found little steam barges awaiting the guests to convey them on board the frigate ; and as the ladies descended from their carriages, they stepped upon a soft carpet between these and the boats.

The quays and piers were tastefully decorated with flowers and flags, amidst which thousands of

coloured lamps shone like so many stars. It was a dark night and there was no moon, so that the illuminations shone to perfection ; and the large ship before us, rigged up to the very top of its tall masts with Venetian lanterns and coloured lamps, which were faithfully reflected on the calm waters below, presented the most fairy-like scene I have ever gazed upon ; and extracted from all beholders an involuntary exclamation of applause and admiration.

Hundreds of little boats, barges, steam-barges, and canoes were crowded around the great ship, each one bearing a bright torch at its bow, thus making a perfect flotilla of lights on the water.

At last we reached the ship. A very large barge had been placed along-side the man-of-war to serve as an entrance-hall. This had been filled with earth, in which were planted palm-trees, from the spreading leaves of which hung coloured lamps, in the form of various tropical fruits, which, I suppose, they were meant to represent. The effect was of course very striking.

On either side of this barge were the sailors in uniform ; and in the centre stood the captain receiving his guests.

From the barge there had been constructed a wide staircase, which rose to the very deck of the ship. The centre of this was carpeted ; but on either side there was a very wide border of natural flowers, amongst which, there had been

placed little coloured lamps, in the style of the balls at the late Hotel de Ville in Paris.

At the top of this stately staircase there was a large archway, entirely covered with sea-weeds, bright sea-shells, and aquatic plants, which gave entrance to the deck.

This had been transformed into a ball-room ; and was covered over with a white awning ; from which hung many chandeliers and garlands of flowers entwined around the masts, which had been made to look like marble columns.

On the deck, which was crowded already, stood the admiral ; who received his guests with the stately dignity of a Spaniard of the old school. It was yet early in the evening, although the dancing had begun. The ladies were all beautifully dressed ; and the men mostly in uniform, which added a great deal to the general effect. The first impression was indeed surprisingly beautiful ; and it would have been hard to recognise, in that splendid ball-room, the deck of an iron-clad ship of war, destined for anything but gaiety and pleasure.



## XXXIV.

“Vergiss die trenen Eodten nicht.”

KORNER.

LILIAN LEIGH was radiant that night. I do not think I had ever seen her look so beautiful. She wore a dress of black tulle, which set off her fair complexion; and amongst its many dark folds were little fire-flies half hidden, which sparkled like living stars when she danced. On her hair she also wore a coronet of these insects, which cast a bright light upon her luxuriant dark tresses.

The Cuban “*cucullo*,” or fire-fly, is a little insect not unlike a beetle; but it possesses three large bright lights, two over its eyes, and one in its breast, the three appearing as one when seen at a certain distance; and the light which they give is so strong that, when seen amongst the flowers in a dark night, it is quite bright enough to point the way, and I have often read by it when in want of a better candle, by holding one of the little beetles over the page.

Under their throats, or necks, they have a little link, through which a hair-pin can be passed, holding them prisoners without hurting them in

the least, so that ladies often wear them in their hair and in their dresses, the effect of which, as may be imagined, is as novel as it is beautiful.

After a few turns round the ball-room in that mad whirlpool, called a waltz, I proposed to her to step outside the awning, at the stern of the vessel to refresh ourselves from the heat of the enclosure.

We did so. Here the noise and confusion of the ball only reached us in a faint murmur, and the cool breeze of the sea soon revived us.

We sat down near the bulwarks, side by side, and for some minutes we remained in silence contemplating the lovely scene before us.

Immediately beneath us, and almost touching the iron-covered sides of the ship, were innumerable little boats and barges full of *guajiros*, and market women, who had come to get a distant view of the fine ladies and the gallant officers enjoying themselves, little expecting to be themselves the object of any one's observation.

Beyond them lay the town; the many lights of which, reflected in the water, gave it an appearance which I could only compare with that presented by Venice during the gay nights of the carnival, when the queen of the Adriatic seems to awaken from her dream, and once more revive into the capital of the Doges.

The Machina, decorated and illuminated to-night for the occasion, and from which, ever and

anon, a rocket would rise into the air, presented a bright point in the distance, attractive enough in itself to have absorbed all our attention.

There was no moon, as I have said before; but the stars sparkled in all their glory; and the southern cross itself was high over the distant landscape.

To this enchanting scene we must add the soft gentle strains of the band, which floated from the ball room; and then the reader may perhaps have an idea, although always an imperfect one, of the wondrous beauty and fascination of the spectacle unfolded before my bewildered senses as I sat by the side of the lovely American; who, at that moment, sparkled like the queen of night, the presiding goddess of the scene, radiant in all her charms by the bright glitter of the fire-flies imprisoned under the gauzy folds of her dark dress.

I was the first to break the silence, which, of itself, was melodious enough to fill our hearts with soft thoughts. "You seem sad," I said to my beautiful companion, as I gazed upon her fair young face, which seemed lost in deep meditation, a thing so unusual with her that it could not but call my attention. "You seem sad, Lilian, to-night — to-night!" I added, "of all nights, when you are reigning supreme over all hearts, the beauteous queen of night. I have never seen you look so well, Lilian," I continued, seeing that she did not answer my first remark;

“black becomes you more than you have any idea, and those *cucullos* shine as stars amidst your beautiful tresses.”

“And what is it to me?” she said at last, but in such a quiet dreamy way that it seemed more like thinking aloud than speaking. “What is it to me to reign supreme over men’s hearts, if the only one I in the least appreciate, belongs to another?”

As she muttered these words her face turned bright crimson, for she felt her lips had betrayed her thoughts. Her breathing became agitated, and caused the diamonds on her snowy neck to sparkle, as they rose and fell on her white breast.

Presently she got up, and, standing straight before me, she said, casting her eyes, for fear I suppose that they should betray her, on the ropes and chains at my feet :

“Carlton, why must the world set itself against me? why should I, all of a sudden, have become the subject of all conversation, the object of all their scandal?”

“What do you mean, Lilian?” I exclaimed, surprised by her words. “Who has dared to talk against you, who has dared to criticise your actions? But you must be mistaken; are you not free? without rigid parents, or jealous husband, without troublesome uncles or stupid aunts? Providence has liberated, and set you free from all those restraints which generally surround a pretty



woman, and has only left you their inheritance. You are a free agent, you can do as you please, and no one has a right to criticise your movements."

"It is true I do not depend on any one, and yet I am dependent on *every* one. A woman is never free, not even when a widow; for society at large takes upon itself to act the part of a jealous husband. I am suspected, watched, and, although free, as you say, I am even afraid of talking to those I like."

"And who is the world jealous of?"

"Of you!"

I might have expected the answer, and yet it took me by surprise. What could I say to that? The dreaded moment had arrived; we both felt it so; and we both remained in silence; looking at one another, fearing to break the spell which had fallen upon us.

The situation was becoming more and more unpleasant, and at last I worked up the courage to begin.

"Of me! of me! and why of me, and not of Cardenas, Grant, Arrias, or Gonzalez, or any of the others?"

"I know not. But you, Carlton, are the one the world points to. Perhaps you are dangerous without knowing it, or society has discovered in you a power ignored by your modesty. I know not. Even my enemies find it natural that those

men you speak of should talk with me, dance with me—it is true—none of them have ever travelled with me, or lived in the same hotel.”

“You are right,” I said ; “I own that I perhaps compromise you. What in truth is but companionship, sympathy, and pure friendship, the world will translate into something far more important and serious. . . . Yet God knows, Lilian, how innocent has been our intercourse. But I must put a stop to all this idle scandal. I will go away.”

She gave a low sigh which, however, did not escape my notice, and her fair cheeks became as pale as the reflection of the fire-flies upon her dress.

As I stood before her, I dreaded to lift my eyes to look at her ; I dreaded to meet her gaze, the danger was too great ; one word of mine would have changed all my future, would have made that beautiful creature mine for ever ; and yet I dreaded that word more than anything ; and the thought of Conchita forbade me from pronouncing it.

“I am sorry, Lilian,” I again said, “that we must part thus ; but you see it is necessary, your honour and mine require it. My friend Halsey is in the bay with his yacht ; he is starting to-morrow for a cruise in the Pacific ; he has often invited me to accompany him on this trip. I will go to-morrow ; I shall then be far away, and your reputation will be saved.”

“Is there no other way of putting an end to this idle talk?” she murmured, with tears in her eyes.

I looked at her for one moment; I was nearly falling at her feet, but I soon recovered myself.

“None that I know of. . . . Can you think of one?”

I saw her grow pale, and then again flushed; the diamonds round her swan-like throat sparkled more than ever; she was obliged to lean against the side of the vessel for support. At last a word came from her mouth, a word which sounded more like a sob.

“No.”

We shook hands without looking at one another; the next moment I had left the ship.

## XXXV.

“Yes, speak to me ! I have outwatched the stars,  
And gazed o’er heaven in vain, in search of thee.  
Speak to me ! I have wandered o’er the earth  
And never found thy likeness. Speak to me !  
This once—once more !”

BYRON.

WHEN I got back to the hotel, my first intention was to pack all my things. I must fly, I said to myself ; now or never is the time to get away from her ; to-morrow will be too late !

My head was burning with fever ; I went into the balcony, and stood there for at least half an hour, with my head leaning against the balustrade. Was it possible that I was going to quit this beautiful land for ever ? There, before me, was the bay—the ever-beautiful phosphorescent bay of Havana, and in its centre, lay at anchor, the “Numancia,” brilliant with its many lights up to the very top of its masts, with flags and lamps. Even from where I stood I could see the shadows of the dancers as they moved along the decks to the sound of the music within. There was Lilian, the beautiful American, from whom I must fly. Methought I saw her leaning over the stern with her eyes fixed upon my balcony, still in the same place where I had left her.



But I had conquered the temptation once : I must not fall into it again. Beyond the brilliant man-of-war, and half lost in the shadow of the night, was a little steamer, the *Caledonia*, my friend's yacht, that was so soon to bear me away from all these bright scenes, far over the unsoundable deserts of the Pacific Ocean.

This put me in mind of one thing. "I must let Halsey know that I accept his invitation," I said to myself, "there is no time to lose, if he sails to-morrow, as he intended."

I went to my desk to write him a note. As I opened the top, a paper fell out of it. It was the curious cryptogram I had found so mysteriously upon my table at the Ingenio de Azucena.

I picked it up, and once more devoured the extraordinary cypher with my anxious eyes. What could it mean? What mystery could be hidden in those quaint-looking characters?

ሥነ ምግባርና ሥነ ጥበቃ ለሕይወት  
 ልማትና ለሰላም አስፈላጊ ሲሆን  
 የሀገሪቱን ጥቅም ለማረጋገጥ  
 ማሳደግና ማስፈጸም ይገባል፡፡  
 ስለዚህም የሥነ ምግባርና  
 የሥነ ጥበቃ ስራዎችን በጥንቃቄ  
 ማከናወንና ማስፈጸም ይገባል፡፡

୧୨୩୪୫୬୭୮୯୧୦୧୧୧୨.

An idea struck me all at once. This signature of eight signs, was it not most probably that of *Conchita*? What other could it be, if not?

Yes! it must come from Conchita! And if so, each one of those eight signs will correspond to each one of the eight letters of her name!

I took a piece of paper, and wrote down the following key:

	= C		= H
	= O		= I
	= N		= T
	= C		= A

"It must be right!" I exclaimed, when I had written this down, "because the two C's of the name are represented by the same character. This, then, is the clue. I will now replace each of these signs by the corresponding letter wherever I find them. After a few minutes, I had written down on the piece of paper by my side the following mixture of signs and letters:



A ? A O L A E T l f H A Y O l f  
 O I O E A l Y O Y A O l f O N O  
 E A A ? I O A E A ? l E E O f A Y ?  
 l f T A Y l E A O f T I O l Y  
 l l E C I l E O l O l Y l A C O ? l  
 N I C A f C O ? T l l Y O I f I T l



This was certainly very slow work, and threw very little light upon the subject, for after all, eight letters out of twenty-six was a very poor beginning.



Of one thing I was now convinced, and that was, that the cryptogram was written in Spanish, for three reasons—firstly, because the letter A was the most frequent, while in English, E is the principal one; secondly, because of the many terminations in O and A, which are so thoroughly Spanish; and thirdly, because Conchita—if indeed it were she who had written it—would naturally write in her own language.

As I was studying what I had written, with little hopes of ever discovering its real meaning; one thing suddenly struck me—in this curious cypher there were really only thirteen different characters, the rest being the same with a line through the centre.

In the Spanish alphabet there are twenty-six letters, just the double. Now, supposing that the signs with a line across them indicated the letter following, and those without it the letter preceding, I should then possess sixteen letters to my key instead of eight.

Thus—If  was C,  must be D.

If  was O,  must be P.

If  was N,  must be M.

If  $\mathfrak{J}$  was H,  $\mathfrak{O}$  must be G.

If  $\mathfrak{Y}$  was T,  $\mathfrak{X}$  must be S; and

If  $\mathfrak{J}$  was A,  $\mathfrak{I}$  must be B.

According to this supposition, I then wrote down the following, replacing the signs by the letters which I supposed they must represent :—

A M A D O  $\mathfrak{X}$  A  $\mathfrak{E}$  T  $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{F}$  H A S  $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{F}$  D  
 I D  $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{E}$  A  $\mathfrak{G}$  S P O S A P  $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{F}$  O N O  $\mathfrak{E}$  A  
 A M I G A  $\mathfrak{E}$  A  $\mathfrak{P}$   $\mathfrak{Y}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{G}$  O  $\mathfrak{F}$  A S M  $\mathfrak{Y}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{F}$   
 T A  $\mathfrak{Y}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{E}$  A P O  $\mathfrak{F}$  T I D  $\mathfrak{G}$  S D  $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{E}$  C  
 I  $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{E}$  O  $\mathfrak{X}$  D  $\mathfrak{G}$  S  $\mathfrak{G}$  A C O M  $\mathfrak{Y}$  N I C A  $\mathfrak{F}$   
 C O N T  $\mathfrak{Y}$   $\mathfrak{G}$  S P I  $\mathfrak{F}$  I T  $\mathfrak{Y}$





This, certainly was a little clearer ; there were many words which must be right—such as Amado, Has, Amiga, Con, &c.

My supposition then, that the signs with a line across them were meant to represent the following letter, and those without a line the one before it, was right.



Another thing struck me, now that I possessed the first word—the six signs following must stand for my name *Walter*, and this much more so






since the W and the T were already in the right place.

 therefore was W;       therefore was E; and  
 „      L;       „      R.



















And if this were the case, the signs resembling these, with and without lines, must represent the letters following or preceding them.

So if  is R,  must be Q.


Now I only needed three letters to translate the mysterious cipher—


   and 


This I had no possible means of finding out, but I wrote the rest of them with the corresponding letter of our alphabet underneath each, thus—

								
A	B	C	D	E	G	H	I	L
								
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	W

As soon as I had written this, I saw that the three signs remaining would only be U, V, and Y.

 must therefore be U,

 „      V, and

 „      Y.

Now I possessed the meaning of every one of the signs employed in the cryptogram; so I began

to decipher it, which I did with a beating heart, and a trembling hand.

I was going at last to find out the mystery which had so bewildered me for a whole week ; now I was going to decipher this curious message sent from a dead wife to a living husband—a message from another world, in which, perhaps, my whole future existence was concerned.

I trembled with excitement, as I wrote, by the aid of my new alphabet :—

*Amado Walter: Has perdido la Esposa, pero no la amiga. La que lloras muerta, vela por ti desde el cielo ; y desea comunicar con tu espiritu.*

CONCHITA.

(Beloved Walter : Thou hast lost the wife, but not the friend. She whom thou weepst as dead, is watching over thee from heaven, and desires to communicate with thy spirit. CONCHITA.)

This, then, is the mystery—she is near me, my wife ! my angel ! And she desires to communicate with me ! What would I not give up for thee ? What are all the pleasures the world can offer compared to this ? I might have doubted the strange manifestations obtained through Dr Slade in New York, but I could not doubt this, for in this case I had been my own *medium*.

Yes, I will stay and receive thy communications, sweet angel. I will stay ! Not for Lilian, but for Conchita !

Part the Second.





# NIGHT THE FIRST.

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The soul is immortal,—PYTHAGORAS.



## NIGHT THE FIRST.

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### I.

“Celui qui en dehors des mathématiques pures, prononce le mot *impossible* manque de prudence.”—ARAGO.

It was a beautiful night, the stars were shining brightly over head, as I stood on my balcony overlooking the bay and the distant sea beyond. My eyes wandered over the many spires and towers of the sleeping city at my feet, and over the tall masts of the hundreds of vessels now at rest, as they lay at anchor in the safe harbour of this beautiful island, so deservedly called the Queen of the Antilles. As I raised my eyes and my thoughts towards those bright distant stars, I saw one constellation grouped over another; and beyond, millions and millions of miles from the earth, nebulae formed by collections of thousands of worlds, smiling placidly down upon this little earth below, which, however, they could not possibly distinguish from such an enormous distance.

As my eyes wandered from sun to sun, lost in mute admiration of the glories of nature, I seemed drawn more particularly towards one of them, by a force which I could not describe, and which

I would compare to sympathy, if such a comparison did not almost sound absurd. Of the many stars before my gaze I only saw one now, all the rest seemed to have faded away, and left in the blue sky but one source of light, but one point of attraction.

A luminous mist seemed to proceed from this star, a mist which grew larger and larger. This mysterious vapour also seemed to take form as it gently approached the earth . . . as it approached the very spot from whence I gazed . . . as it approached me. Presently it touched the balcony upon which I leant. Suddenly it vanished, and in its place . . . I beheld Conchita, my angel wife, who fell into my arms and smiled sweetly as I clasped her to my heart. Pronouncing one word, only one, but worth all the universe to me, a word that not only issued from her lips, but shone from her eyes and beamed from her whole countenance, as she gazed intently on me once more . . . that one word was—

“ Love ! ”

For a long time we remained lost in a close and rapturous embrace. At last, then, we had met once more! Husband and wife—after six long months of separation, of anguish, of incessant longing, and concentrated thought . . . at last we met again; and I felt we met now, never more to part.

And yet an unsoundable abyss divided us still; for we belonged to different spheres, to dif-



ferent worlds, and I could not help shuddering in spite of my great happiness, as I remembered this tremendous fact.

Conchita perceived my despair, and with an angel smile she whispered, or rather breathed—for I could *perceive* her words rather than hear them with my outward ears—“Our spirits have never been divided, dearest ; and you have often felt my presence, for I have never ceased to discern your thoughts which have been so constantly devoted to me.”

But from this great crisis in my life's history, I prefer to record our conversations as they took place, and as nearly as possible in the words we used ; for, by so doing, I shall avoid confusing my reader with useless repetitions, and still more useless remarks concerning them.

*Walter.* “Can it be you, my own Conchita ! Is it possible I again can hold you in my arms, and clasp you to my heart ; and that you still love me, and still are mine !”

*Conchita.* “Yes, Walter, our love is stronger than the grave. Death cannot part us : we are one . . . one for ever !”

*Walter.* “But are you dead ? or is this only a dream, a wild impossible dream, too sweet to last, and from which on waking, I shall sink again into the misery and the sorrow of my utter loneliness, which will be more horrible than ever, now that I

have dreamt of heaven and realised your presence ? ”

*Conchita.* “ It is not a dream, in the way you employ that word. I am real, as real as a disembodied spirit can be on earth. It is not a dream, for you are not sleeping at this moment, although, as long as you are bound to this material sphere, your spirit is more or less enthralled. Walter, the material life is but an imprisonment of the soul. It will some day seem to you like a dream, but you will not thus see it until you wake into the real life, the life beyond the grave.”

*Walter.* “ The grave ! Ah, Conchita ! pronounce not that accursed word that has so cruelly divided us ! — pronounce not that word which alone has parted our love ! ”

*Conchita.* “ And why not, O my husband ! You would not be so cruel as to deny me my liberty — my life ? But I know when I was on the earth, that I too hated that word, knowing not its true meaning, and seeing only in death the unsoundable depths of a material grave. But I am a free spirit now, Walter. I know the why and the wherefore of death, and I bless it. You still loathe it, but it is because you still think it can take me away from you. But now you must learn no longer to hate it, for you will know that it cannot divide us, for nothing material can affect our love which is so purely spiritual.”

*Walter.* “ But how is it that you can come

back unto the earth? How is it that you are thus permitted to communicate with me?"

*Conchita*.—"I could tell you, but you would not understand it; as yet you are too material to comprehend the laws of the spiritual world. Know only that around you, at your very side, are thousands of spirits, invisible to your material eyes, but not for that the less real. If your material organisation cannot perceive them, you will know them some day by your spiritual insight. All on earth are surrounded by invisible guardians, guides, and friends. Sympathy and affection draw them towards you, and they are drawn still more by love. We are sometimes allowed to envelope ourselves with a semi-material body, and appear to those we love. The material form you hold in your arms at the present moment is nothing but cosmic matter; the outward clothing of my inward soul, and mere matter; that inward soul you could not touch any more than I could touch yours; even in the pure spirit life the soul must have a container, or spiritual body."

*Walter*.—"But how is it, Conchita, if you found it so easy to appear to me, that you have not done so before?"

*Conchita*.—"I could not. My duties and yours forbade it; but I have been always near you, at least near you in spirit; for my body (my spirit body, I mean) has wandered from star to star, and traversed many a time the distant

regions of the coloured suns. But I did appear to you once,—in New York,—when I told you to wait a few months longer, and I would then be able to communicate with you face to face, and without the assistance of any medium. The time I mentioned has arrived ; and now you have me by your side, true to my word.”

*Walter*.—“ But why was this long space of time needed before you could again make yourself visible to me ? ”

*Conchita*.—“ For two reasons ; I had a mission to perform ; and you had to undergo certain temptations and trials before you were prepared and qualified to hold direct communication with the spirit world. You have triumphed over the temptations which have been put before you by the over-rulers ; and have proved yourself faithful to your sister spirit, faithful to our love ; and, see, here I am by your side, from whence no earthly power can remove me more.”

*Walter*.—“ Oh, Conchita, I love you ! I love you now more than ever, for you have braved death for my sake ; will you now remain always by my side ? ”

*Conchita*.—“ Can you doubt it ? ”

*Walter*.—“ It seems too sweet to be true ; are you really sure I am not dreaming, and that the desires of my heart do not take form during my sleep ? ”

*Conchita*.—“ What would it matter even if it



were a dream ! You have me near you ; is that not enough ? But thank God, Walter, it is no dream, but a reality, and as real as anything else in your poor little earth."

*Walter.*—"Can you describe to me your death, Conchita ? Can you tell me all about that awful moment which follows the cessation of life, and the glorious sequel to that moment when the soul awakens in another sphere,—your birth into life everlasting ? I love you so much, Conchita, that I am jealous of each moment of those six cruel months which have elapsed since your death."

*Conchita.*—"I will tell you all I know. Perhaps you won't understand me—most likely you will not comprehend all I have to say,—but I should like you to participate in all my impressions, and take part in my present happiness. Listen, therefore, oh Walter ! to what befell your loving wife after she had quitted this world you call earth, and that prison you call life !"

## 11.

“ La mort n'est qu'un mot ; elle n'est pas.”

BOUCHER DE PERTHES.

“ La mort est la plus grande des libertés. Elle est aussi le plus grand des progrès, c'est la montée de tout ce qui a vécu au degré supérieur.”

VICTOR HUGO.

*Conchita*.—Men cannot think of death without thinking of the grave. This is the great mistake you all make upon earth. Death is but a second birth—a birth into the spirit world, the same as this is a birth into a material one, and both are entered through a grave ; for what is the mother's womb but a grave, through which we enter the material world ?

You see, then, we are born into the world through a grave ; the spirit, by means of the magnetic qualities which connect it with the soul, accretes to itself matter with which it constructs a material organisation. Then the spirit dies from the spiritual world, and is born into the earth. Years pass, during which the spirit, by means of this vital force, is constantly attracting to itself particles of matter, with which to form its outward material body. This material body is composed of the various molecules of matter

which surround the spirit in whatever sphere it may find itself for the time being; they are inert and passive as they are indestructible. They enter into the organisation by the respiration and the alimentation, and are daily renewed. These molecules are always the same; the molecule of iron is always iron, whether it form part of the brain of a Newton or of the hammer of a blacksmith; oxygen is always oxygen, whether in a human eye or in a drop of rain. Of particles, such as these, is our human frame composed. Attracted by our animal magnetism, they are united together—amalgamated, as we may say, into one organisation, by means of the vital principle, the electric spark procedent from the spirit. The material atoms are indestructible; the vital force is not. The material atoms have no age; vital force is born, grows old, and at last dies. A man of ninety is older than one of twenty. Why? The atoms which constitute their bodies have only formed part of them for the last few months, and cannot therefore be called old. If analysed, the elements which constitute their bodies have no age. Their spirits, of course, cannot have grown old, for they are immaterial, and therefore time cannot have any power over them. What is wearing out is the animal magnetism, the vital force given for a certain time; which, in the man of ninety, has been exhausted, whilst in the youth of twenty,

it has but just arrived at its full development.

As far as I can tell you, this vital force is nothing but electricity, and is therefore procedent from certain causes. It can be transmitted by generation ; it can be extinguished. It is but an effect dependent on certain causes, but it is an effect which constitutes life.

It is this electrical magnetic force which attracts and assimilates round the spirit or soul-envelope the molecules which are to form its earthly body ; and which are constantly changing throughout the terrestrial life of the spirit.

But this body, like all things made for a certain purpose, and a certain time, cannot last ; the particles which compose it are daily changing and others taking their place, and this constant wear and tear cannot go on for ever ; the life-principle becomes exhausted, and the freshness of the body begins to fade. How soon do signs of age appear on the previously downy cheek, and at last when the power of attraction is worked out, when the great electric battery of the soul can no longer affect the material molecules necessary to form and keep up its perishable body, this shrinks and shrinks, and gradually becomes weaker and weaker, and finally dies.

Thus death may take place after many years, when the body has grown old and feeble, and the animal magnetism is exhausted, or it can take



place in the middle of its earthly career, like mine did, when some accident deprives it suddenly of the magnetic fluid, falsely called life; and the spirit is then obliged to withdraw. The gates of its earth-life are closed, and the spirit, once more free, is born into the spirit-world.

As the seed dies, the shoot grows from it; and hence the development of the plant, the blossom, the new seed, and then the death of the material structure, and the gathering of its fruits.

As the spiritual body dies on entering the material sphere, the spirit springs from it, and commences the formation of its material body; in this it is developed, and undergoes a certain amount of instruction; then this also dies, and the spirit gathers up the fruits of its last existence, and finding itself once more free, recommences the magnetic construction of its new spiritual body or envelope.

This is the history of all forms; the history of birth, life, and death, which are, as you see, but sequences to one another, the natural consequences of the cessation of the one and the commencement of the other.

You may fail to comprehend what I say, dearest husband; you, who can at present only see the half of our life, cannot be expected to imagine or to realise the glories of the other half. You could never believe, if you did not absolutely witness with your own eyes, that the caterpillar would

turn into a bright butterfly. But this is only a shadow of the changes which await us in our transit through the other world. We are all, like the caterpillar, changed at death ; only that the insect operates its resurrection on our earth, under our own observation, and thus leaves us no doubt concerning the possibility of such a change.

You must often have seen, in the fountains at Carlton Hall, a little red worm which floats in the middle of the waters ; for its specific gravity is only equal to that of the liquid, and it cannot therefore descend to the bottom or ascend to the top. Our spirit can be, with much truth, compared to this little worm. While imprisoned in a material form it is obliged to submit to the particular conditions of the world it inhabits. Like the worm, it is enveloped in an organisation adapted to the element in which it lives, incapable of subsisting in another. We pass some time under this form of being, and while in it we do our work and learn our lesson as best we can. But one fine day the worm throws off its old body, and out of it emerges a beautiful fly, not unlike the worm, but infinitely more beautiful, more ethereal, and, when viewed through a microscope by the light of the sun, we find it clothed in a glittering body, far more beautiful than any precious gems of the mineral world.

As the fly bursts forth, it leaves the body of the worm on the surface of the water, while the

new born creature takes its flight towards the bright sunshine of the eternal heavens. So do we; when we at last cast off our material envelope, we find ourselves gathering a far more beautiful body, but not unlike the former in its outward shape and appearance; and on quitting the earth in which we have lived, we soar aloft to the spiritual spheres.

We have now changed our organisation, and therefore our conditions of existence; we live in a different element, and possess a body in harmony with our new state. While in the material world, like the worm of which I have spoken, we could not wing our flight upwards, we could not quit the element to which alone our organisations were adapted; and now we have cast off the material body, we cannot go back to it; the fly can no longer live in the depths of the fountain, and surely it would not, even if it could.

Death is, therefore, not to be dreaded, but to be looked to, as towards a liberator—a liberator who frees us from the miseries of the material world, a liberator who opens to us the golden gates of eternal sunshine.

Men, you will say, do not so much fear death as they fear the moment of transition.

It is true, the change of existence is never gone through without a certain amount of pain and perturbation, but this is so small compared to the glories which await us on the other side,



that it becomes as naught, when once we are able to appreciate what we gain by it.

During our existence on the earth, the electric current I have called *life*, runs through all parts of the body, and forms the vehicle which transmits all the physical sensations, and the medium of communication from the soul to the body, carrying its messages to the diverse parts of the frame, and bringing the telegraphic answers back to the mind, that its mandate has been obeyed. At the extinction of organic life, soul and body are separated by the rupture of the electric chain which unites them. This separation cannot be sudden, because this particular electric condition which I have called life, must disengage itself by degrees from all the organs it binds together. The complete disunion is therefore not fully accomplished until every particle of this force or fluid is withdrawn from every molecule of matter. The painful sensations experienced during the rupture are due to the number of points of contact still existing between it and the body, and the greater or less time required to effect this complete separation.

This is the philosophy of death ; a truth which I ignored as I lay hovering on the brink between life and so-called *death*, in the tapestried chamber at Carlton Hall. I did not fear death ; I did not expect to die ; the doctors and nurse had done all they possibly could, to make me forget the danger



to which the slightest of my movements exposed me. I did not suffer much; all my thoughts were centred on one hope, one all-engrossing object—my child!

It was in the middle of summer, as you know. The large oriel window of my apartment was wide open, and from my bed I could watch the heavy slate-coloured clouds as they sailed along the sky, now hiding, then revealing the pale moon, whose rays of pure pale white illuminated the gardens and terraces below.

You came into the room for one brief moment to ask how I was getting on, and to impress upon my burning forehead a sweet kiss of love. This was the last time I saw you upon the earth. You leant over me, and as your lips touched my head, they pronounced the last words I heard from you —“I love you, my darling!”

Then you went away, for you feared to remain; you were much moved, very agitated, and seemed indeed to suffer more than I did myself; so I would not ask you to stop by my side.

Once more alone, I again fixed all my attention on the passing clouds, and dreaming of future happiness, when I should hold in my arms my little Raphael (or Raphaëla, for then I did not know whether it would be a boy or a girl), I fell into a sleep.

I did not sleep long, for I was awoke by the most excruciating pains. I felt as if my bones

were breaking ; all my nerves seemed to be drawn by some mysterious power ; I felt that I must die. I had no strength to bear so much ; I could neither speak nor scream, for all utterance seemed to be paralysed ; then I felt a dreadful pain in the head, the skull seemed indeed to burst by this terrific blow, and all was over. I lost consciousness.

When I again recovered it, I was in a new world. Bright faces surrounded me, from which rays of light seemed to proceed, purer and brighter than those of the very sun. I felt no pain whatever now. I could see myself, and my body seemed to be the same. Was I really in another world ?

Presently the mist before me cleared away. I saw the bed, and in it a body, or rather a corpse. As I looked at it I could hardly restrain a cry, for in that cold corpse I recognised myself.

Round the bed were several people, and in another corner of the room a nurse held in her arms a new-born child. My heart leaped with joy as I beheld him—my Raphael, my pretty little Raphael. But as I looked around I saw tears and sorrow on every face ; no one seemed to share my immense happiness ; nothing but misery and pain was expressed in those countenances ; as for you—I could not see you. In vain did I look around and search each corner of the room—you were not there.

A thick white mist seemed to collect now around me. I felt myself going upwards. I wanted to remain in the room, but a will stronger than my own drew me towards brighter regions above, and I was obliged to comply.

### III.

“Dying, she shall be welcomed by her father, her mother, and her brother in the other world.”—SOPHOCLES.

*Conchita.*—I cannot tell you how I traversed the space, and by what extraordinary force I felt myself drawn upwards ; but I could not stop—higher and higher, I went through one constellation and another. The earth seemed to recede from me, rather than I to depart from it. I had hardly quitted your globe when I found myself in a region whence the earth appeared only as a dim star, half lost in the mighty rays of the blazing sun, which threw it into deep shade.

I approached the remote constellations which you can scarcely distinguish from the earth, and although, from the new regions I was now traversing in space, they looked very different, yet I think I recognised some which you so often had pointed out to me whilst on earth.

But I could not stop, even to admire the glories of creation. I passed systems of revolving worlds, isles of ethereal light, nebulous realms where worlds are but forming, sumptuous regions that the Eternal Sower has sown with worlds as



profusely as he has sown your earthly fields with flowers.

I was now drawing near a very large star of the purest white, much larger—at least so it seemed to me—than the sun of our system; and whose rays, I am sure, seen from where I was, would have blinded and burnt any human eye. They had no effect of that kind for me whatever. I did not even feel the enormous heat which must have proceeded from them; capable, I am convinced, of reducing to ashes the entire earth, if near enough to feel its influence.

This star, if my calculations were not wrong, formed part of the constellation of the Lyre—one of those around the polar star—and must have been the  $\alpha$  or the  $\beta$  of that group. Behind it, millions and trillions of leagues beyond, was the white river of the Milky Way, sparkling upon the dark blue sky, with its hundreds of thousands of suns, and which even from here had more the appearance of a misty cloud than that of a *nebulæ*.

I thought I was going to stop in this brilliant sun; but no, I passed it, and then for the first time I saw ten dark bodies which revolved around it. I was in a planetary system. The large star was the sun, and the ten dark bodies were the planets, and some of them had satellites of their own, even as the earth I had so recently left.

These ten planets went round their sun in the

same way as those of this solar system go round *their* sun, but they were larger than those belonging to our *day giver*, and the central star which lighted them was brighter and whiter than even ours.

It was in one of these worlds that I at last ended my journey. I came upon it gradually, descending upon its surface gently and softly, as a bird descends upon the green fields of your world.

I then found myself in what you would have taken for a large city, on account of the great number of persons who seemed to be collected together; but neither houses nor streets were anywhere to be seen; and above, hovering over the crowd, were hundreds of others, scarcely less busy, moving to and fro in mid air, and apparently without the aid of any wings.

As I stood utterly bewildered, by the new and strange scene before my eyes, I felt the pressure of an arm round my waist. I looked round, and what was my astonishment to find myself face to face with my darling mother; my dear, dear mother, whose loss I had so deeply mourned, and who had passed away from earth, as you know, but a few months before me!

I need not describe to you the emotions of our first meeting, nor the hundreds of questions she put to me, and the hundreds with which, in my turn, I overwhelmed her.

Another being, also radiant with light, now came up to me, and in him I recognised my father !

Ah ! Walter, how could I tell you all that I felt at that moment. I was no longer alone, nor a stranger in the new world that was destined to be my future home. I was surrounded by my beloved parents and my friends, for they all came to me, one after another, and welcomed me to my new existence ; all, all whom I had so wept and sorrowed for while on earth, ignorant of the glorious bliss which had become their portion, and from which I would so selfishly have recalled them to our earth. I was happy . . . happy ; and I should have been supremely blest if you had been with me to have shared my emotions and taken part in my joy.

Presently they all went away, all the well-known faces which had shown such marks of delight at seeing me ; and I was left alone with my father.

“ Shall I see God ? ” I asked him as soon as we were alone.

“ God ! ” he exclaimed, much surprised by my question.

“ Yes, God ; will he not shew himself to me ? ”

“ Oh, my child ! do you think yourself good and perfect enough to see God face to face ? You must dismiss from your mind, Conchita, all those

wild notions of the earth. Know that the most perfect archangels are not pure enough, nor sufficiently advanced to behold the Creator, and *you* would see him, *you* who have but just arrived from one of the most imperfect and purgatorial of worlds."

"But is he not near me now?" I asked, thoroughly confused.

"Near you! He is always near you. As near whilst on the earth as in the most glorious part of the heavens. He is everywhere, present alike in all parts of his universe."

"But are we not in heaven?"

"In heaven, child; what extraordinary ideas you bring from that poor little world of yours! I suppose you think yourself good enough to go straight to the courts of heaven, don't you? This is not heaven, Conchita; this is but a world like the earth, only more ethereal and more spiritual, but that is all; if you want to know, we call it Arabel, and it is one of the smallest of the ten planets which revolve around the sun you see above, and which the astronomers of the earth have called Vega, and placed in the constellation of the Lyre, in which they have made a great mistake, for the other stars which they have joined with it, to make the constellation, are millions and millions of leagues from it."

"Are we far from the earth then?"



"No, oh, no! only about 50,830,000 millions of leagues." \*

"And do you call that nothing, father?"

"Of course, the sun you see over your head is one of the stars nearest to the earth, in fact, there are only ten nearer, and of these the nearest, the Alpha of the Centaur, is 8,376,800 millions of leagues away from it."

"You do not ask me any news from the earth, father?" I said, in order to change the conversa-

\* The distances of the stars is a subject which has naturally engaged the close attention of astronomers, both ancient and modern; but all their efforts to arrive at anything like satisfactory conclusions have failed until within a very recent period. The stars appear in precisely the same position from whatever part of the earth they are viewed, but with the hope of detecting some change of place, by which to judge of their separation from us, they have been observed at points as widely distant from each other as we are able to command, viz., from opposite parts of the earth's annual orbit. With this base-line of 190 millions of miles, there is the most favourable chance of detecting the parallax of a star, provided the instruments employed are sufficiently accurate.

An annual parallax of *one* second of arc would indicate a distance of about 206,000 times the radius of the earth's orbit, that is, of 206,000 times 95 millions of miles. In only one instance has a parallax closely approaching this amount been discovered, and this is in the case of the star  $\alpha$  Centauri, which is never visible in England. It is found that the semi-diameter of the earth's orbit would subtend at the star an angle of  $\frac{9.7}{100}$ ths of a second, whence it follows that the distance must be 211,000 times the distance of the sun from the earth, or *twenty billions* of miles. The late Professor Henderson, astronomer royal of Edinburgh, and formerly at the Cape of Good Hope, has the merit of having first detected the parallax of  $\alpha$  Centauri.

This distance is so enormous that the mind is hardly able to appreciate it; light, with its astounding velocity of 192,000 miles per second, furnishes the only unit by which it can be measured,

tion, which was beginning to bewilder me. "Don't you want to know how the Carlist war is going on, and who is the Prime Minister now in Spain?"

"Do you think I need ask you all those things to know them, child! But I see you forget that I am now a free spirit, and can therefore go where I like."

"Can you go to the world I have just left?"

and brought within small numbers. Suppose a ray to leave this star, travelling through space at the above prodigious rate, it would not reach the earth until after the expiration of 1218 days, or  $3\frac{1}{3}$  years. We do not see the star as it actually is, but it shines with the light emitted  $3\frac{1}{3}$  years ago. Hence, if it were obliterated from the heavens, we should continue to see it for more than three years after its destruction.

Shortly before Professor Henderson's announcement appeared respecting  $\alpha$  Centauri, the great astronomer Bessel, of Königsberg, had published the results of his observations upon a star of the sixth magnitude, numbered 61 in Cygnus, from which it was inferred to have a parallax of  $\frac{3.7}{1000}$ ths of a second—a conclusion which is supported by the subsequent researches of Professor Peters at the Imperial Observatory of Pulkowa, Russia, and those of an English astronomer, the late Mr Johnson, director of the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford. Other determinations assign a somewhat larger parallax ( $0''.5$ ); but with the smaller value of Bessel it would appear that the distance of the star must be 550,000 times that which separates the earth from the sun, or 52 billions of miles.

Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens, shows a parallactic displacement of a quarter of a second, which indicates a distance greater than that of 61 Cygni, a star of the sixth magnitude only, Vega in Lyra is supposed to have a parallax of about the same amount.—*The Stars, how to know them and how to use them*, by W. H. Rosser. See also *Introduction to Astronomy*, by J. R. Hind, F.R.S., &c., &c.

“Yes.”

“Could I go?”

“Why, you have only just left it, Conchita, and you already want to return to it!”

“You forget,” I said, “that I have left there my husband and my child.”

“Then you have only to look at that star, the little yellow one, there over your head, it is the sun of your late system; if you look attentively at it you will presently see the earth and the other planets.”

I did so. I fixed my whole attention on the little yellow star over my head. It grew larger and larger, and after a little time all the other stars seemed to vanish from my sight, and the sun, our sun, alone occupied the blue firmament above me.

I now saw eight planets round it, which I knew directly were those of our system. I recognised Saturn, on account of its rings, and Jupiter by its size and its four moons. But the earth, which looked one of the smallest, soon called my attention; and I was able to identify it by means of the moon, who, faithful to it, revolved around the planet. The earth, indeed, looked to me brighter and gayer than the larger planets, perhaps on account of its being nearer to the sun, perhaps because all my attention was fixed upon it, and I was therefore able to see it more clearly. I had observed that whatever I fixed



my attention upon, grew larger and more defined, and ended by standing alone before my gaze. So I fixed my attention entirely upon the little planet, and after a few minutes I was able to distinguish its continents and seas, as plainly as if I had been looking on a map.

I saw the snow of the poles, the blue waves of the great ocean, the yellow triangle of Africa, and near it the Spanish Peninsula, which, seen from such a distance, presented the appearance of a bull's skin extended upon a table of lapis-lazuli.

In the centre of this peninsula I soon traced the deserted plains of the great table land, bounded on the north by the eternal snows of Guadarrama, and on the south by the wilderness of the Mancha, made so famous by the adventures of Don Quixote. In the very middle of the sun-burnt hills I now distinguished a town, smiling with its many gardens and surrounding parks, which alone relieved the monotony of the desert around. A little river ran through this town; it was the Manzanares, and the town—Madrid itself, the capital of Spain, the city of my birth!

I gazed with anxious eyes upon the dear old town; yes, I recognised on the east the heights of the Buen Retiro, covered with trees with thick foliage, under whose delicious shade I had played when a child; on the north side I saw distinctly the colossal marble structure of the palace, raised



high above the town upon many a terrace ; but, to my astonishment, I did not see the great red brick barracks in its vicinity, so conspicuous on account of their site and size. And now, when I looked closer upon the old town, I missed several of the buildings which in my mind were so associated with the capital of Spain. Almost all the suburbs were wanting, particularly those of Salamanca, Principe Pio, Atocha, and Recoletos, and the large railway stations, together with many churches and public buildings.

The streets also presented quite a different aspect ; indeed, Madrid was so changed that, if it had not been for its position, and the few unmistakable buildings, such as the Palace, the Museum, and the churches of San Isidro, Santo Tomas, and the Basilica of Atocha, together with the Gardens of the Retiro, I do not think I should have recognised the town at all, so changed it appeared to me when I stopped to inspect it in detail.

Could this really be Madrid ? I thought, as I gazed upon the town before me, utterly bewildered by the changes which had taken place in it in so short a time. Then it occurred to me that, instead of taking a few seconds, as I had at first thought, to reach Vega, I had taken several years, and that the town I was now gazing upon from that star, was the Madrid of the future.

This could very well have been, for as time is

essentially of a relative character, and peculiar to the earth, once away from it, I would of course have quite lost count of time, for I knew that outside of the earth days and nights do not exist by which we may count its progress. I could, therefore, very well have spent years and centuries during my voyage to Vega and back, without having been aware of their length.

But as I examined more closely the changes which had taken place, I was much surprised by finding that the *Puerta del Sol*, that great centre of the city, presented exactly the same aspect as it did during my youth. The same smaller houses surrounded it, the same crooked and narrow streets emerged from it, and more strange still, the old church of the *Buen Suceso*, which has long ago disappeared, still occupied its central position between the *Calle de Alcalá* and the *Carrera de San Geromino*.

But my astonishment knew no bounds, when in one of the little streets issuing from this square, I recognised the very house in which I had been born twenty-one years before, and which had been pulled down, as you know, to make room for the *Hotel de los Principes*, a few years later !

This was very strange ; instead of having before me the Madrid of the present, or even that of the future, I had before me the Madrid of the past, the Madrid which has so long ago disap-

peared, the Madrid, in fact, of the time of my birth !

I could hardly believe my own eyes, I could scarcely credit my senses, was this really the Madrid of twenty years ago ? How could this be ? Could time go backwards instead of forwards, in the strange land I now inhabited ?

#### IV.

“ The stranger at my fireside cannot see  
The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear,  
He but perceives what is ; while unto me  
All that has been is visible and clear.”

LONGFELLOW.

*Walter.* “ What very strange things are these which you are telling me, Conchita? If you were a living person, I would say you had been dreaming, but I can hardly attribute a dream to a free spirit. How can you account for these strange phenomena? Surely you must have soon found out the truth of what you saw! But before going on with your strange adventures, I wish you would tell me how it was that you were unable to calculate how long you had taken to go to Vega, and see our little earth from that star?”

*Conchita.* “ Because, my dearest husband, in space there is no time. I mean to say, that time, or what you call time on earth, is nothing but a succession of periods, during which certain changes in matter take place. The division of time upon your earth, and upon all others under the same conditions, is necessarily regulated by their movements, with reference to the



central star or sun which illuminates them. Thus day to you, is when the sun's rays fall upon your side of the earth ; night when they fall on the other side, and naturally you are left in the shade. Each planet, even of your system, has a different measurement of time, according to the length of their days and years. Thus, in Neptune the year is one hundred and sixty-four times longer than yours, while in Mercury it is only of eighty-eight days. Thus you see that time is a thing entirely distinct and peculiar to each planet, each of which has an entirely different measurement of it. Whilst outside this, in space, time does not exist at all.

“Time may therefore be defined as the period which is occupied in eternity to effect certain changes in material forms, and is entirely dependent upon the movements of material bodies, by which alone it is regulated.

“Let us suppose ourselves to be present at the origin of a world ; at that period of eternity when God is about to call into existence a new earth, and when there can be no time for that particular world, as it does not exist. But the world is formed, the first hour has sounded, and now it will run its regular and periodical course round its sun, having henceforth nights and days and seasons, according to the velocity of its revolutions.

“Let us now transport ourselves to the last

day of this world, when, bowed beneath the weight of ages, it will be blotted out of the universe. At this epoch the sequence of terrestrial events is interrupted, the planetary movements, by which alone time was constituted, come to an end. The planet is destroyed, and its record of time ends with it.

“Thus in each world there is a different time, dating from the period of its formation, and ending with its final destruction. Outside these worlds there is no time, nothing but eternity, passive and changeless, independent of suns and planets.

“Spirits, while in a material world, are obliged to accommodate themselves to its particular time ; but, once out of it, once free in space, they are no longer limited or confined by it ; for the laws of matter do not, even analogically, define those which bind spirit.

“Thus you see, my dear Walter, that being now a disembodied spirit, independent of the laws of particular worlds, I am unable to appreciate what you call time, and could not therefore realise how long I had taken to travel from the earth to Vega, and from thence look back again upon the earth.”

*Walter.* “I think your definition of time beautiful, Conchita ; for it enables me now, for the first time, to realise its local character ; and that in the numberless worlds of space time is as diverse

as those worlds themselves ; and its ephemerical succession of days, nights, and seasons are merged, beyond the range of each world, in the changeless light of eternity ; that fills with its peaceful splendour, the immensity of God's universe. I only wish I could comprehend as clearly all your grand ideas ; but I am afraid my earthly prejudices, and limited intellect, will always stand in the way of your glorious descriptions."

*Conchita.* "I wish then, my Walter, that you would point out to me the things you cannot understand, so that I may make them clearer to you. You know that I only live for you, even in this bright world of spirits."

*Walter.* "Then, if you are so very kind, my angel wife, let me first of all ask you, how it was that, from the great distance in which you found yourself, 50,830,000 millions of leagues from the earth, if I remember rightly, you were able to distinguish so plainly our poor little globe ? How is it that this and all the other planets are not lost amongst the glorious rays of the sun, as are those of other systems in the central star, when we see them from our observatories ?"

*Conchita.* "You are quite right, Walter ; this would indeed be the case if we saw, as you do, with material eyes ; but our organs are purely spiritual, and can therefore see the smallest

flower, where your largest telescopes only distinguish a misty nebula. In the material eye, the rays of light—which, as you know, constitute the vision—diverge, and diverge in such a way as to make a small object placed near it, appear quite large, thus hiding a larger but more distant one from its sight. In the spiritual eye this does not take place, for the rays of the vision enter it in parallel lines, and thus it can see each object, independent of the laws of perspective in its real proportions.

“This will explain to you, I think, how it was that from my new home, near the beautiful sun of Vega, and about 50,830,000 millions of leagues from the earth, I was able to distinguish, when I fixed my attention upon them, not only the streets of Madrid, but even the people walking in them.”

*Walter.* “Your explanation seems very clear, Conchita; and I think I can comprehend you better, now I see that in order to appreciate fully your adventures, I must keep constantly in mind that your organs are different from mine; that you are independent of any laws of time, and in one word, that you are no longer a human being, but a disembodied spirit.

“One thing, however, puzzles me still. It is true that you are an immaterial being, and are therefore independent of all material laws; but surely you must depend upon space, for this is a



thing equally necessary to all, whether material or spiritual ; your spirit, pure and immaterial as it is, must necessarily occupy some space."

*Conchita.* "I have told you already that spirit is unhindered by, and independent of, all the laws of time and space as applied to changes in matter. Spirit does not occupy any material space.

"In the chemical decomposition of death, the spirit quits the form it occupied ; yet all the attributes of matter will be found in their integrity in the form which *was a man*, but which, destitute of spirit, is man no more. If you weigh the lifeless corpse, nothing seems to be wanting, nothing there is lost, nothing at least that lived in what you call time, or occupied what men term space. By this alone I can prove to you that the true man—the invisible spirit that has fled—has neither weight, nor density, impenetrability nor divisibility, nay, nor any of the attributes of matter ; but is like thought, free to come and go, and realises none of the boundaries of time, nor the obstacles of space, which are purely material."

*Walter.* "Now I think I can comprehend all you have told me before, but I am most anxious to know how it was that when you saw Madrid from Vega you saw it so changed ? This is a mystery I fear I shall never understand. Could you not have been mistaken, and thought you

really saw, what was in truth but a dim recollection of your early life passed in a town, which a few years have so much altered and improved ? ”

*Conchita.* “ You will see, from what befel me directly afterwards, that the town I had seen from Vega was really the Madrid of my birth ; and I think, after hearing all I have to tell you on the subject, that you will no longer wonder at this, which to you at present seems so mysterious, and which is but a natural phenomenon, easy to be accounted for by the law of Nature, like every other, when the mind is capable of understanding and appreciating the explanation.”

## V.

“ In Scripture we are perpetually reminded that the laws of the spiritual world are, in the highest sense, laws of Nature, whose obligation, operation, and effect are all in the constitution and course of things.”—DUKE OF ARGYLE.

You may easily imagine, my dearest Walter, how surprised I was at seeing before me not only the Madrid of the time of my birth, but the very house in which I had been born twenty-one years before, and which has long ago disappeared.

I had hardly recovered from my surprise, when I felt the soft pressure of a hand upon my shoulder. This brought me back instantly to the full consciousness of my situation. I turned round, and saw my father, who stood behind me, anxiously watching my movements !

“ You are studying your past life,” he said, as a sweet smile played upon his angel face.

“ O Father ! ” I exclaimed, taking him by the hand, “ can you explain to me this mystery ?—can you tell me whether this is really the earth I see in the distance, or a vision caused by the dim recollections of my youth ? ”

“ It is really the earth, my child. But I can understand how it is that you are astonished at seeing it as it appeared at the time of your birth.

However, it is neither, as you would at first imagine, a vision, nor phenomenon of memory, nor even a marvellous and supernatural occurrence; but an actual, natural, incontestible, and positive fact, which I think you will soon be able to realise and appreciate."

"Can this be a natural occurrence? Can the past indeed become again the present?"

"In this world, as well as on the earth, there is nothing supernatural, although you may perhaps be inclined to think otherwise, when I tell you that for us free spirits there is no past. But even this extraordinary fact can be easily accounted for by the laws of Nature.

"Nature, as you know, is ruled by certain laws, unchangeable, immutable, eternal. The whole course of the beautiful universe before you is but the collective result of laws. There are also spiritual laws as well as material, for spirits are also ruled by laws the same as matter. All occurrences, therefore, in the spiritual, as in the material world, are determined by the relations of the elements, and the actions of the forces of which these rules are thus prescribed.

"Thus you see that nothing ever happens contrary to these laws. Men, as yet, only know a few of the laws which govern matter, and even to acquire this knowledge, limited and imperfect as it is, the labours and the endowments of ages have been necessary. As for the spiritual laws,



which govern the spirit-world, they are still completely ignorant of them."

"Were these laws of which you speak made to rule creation?—I mean to say, were they accommodated to the foreseen wants of living beings, or did those wants proceed from the laws that govern them?"

"The things, and the laws that govern them, being created at the same time, they were made the one for the other; and in this you can see the mathematical foresight of God, who knew, when He created the universe, what laws it would require."

"But is there a law, dear father, that will explain how it is that the past has all at once turned into the present before my very eyes?"

"I will try to explain to you this natural and incontestible truth. You know that light is not transmitted from one place to another instantly, as was once believed by men; but that it takes a certain time to traverse space, the same as sound, &c. The light proceeding from a star takes therefore some time to reach the earth, the length of which depends, of course, on the distance of the said star from your planet.\*

\* *The discovery of the laws of light.*—"After the motions of the four moons of Jupiter had been sufficiently observed to construct tables of their movements, with a view to predict their eclipses, some unaccountable phenomena presented themselves, which, for a time, baffled all the efforts to explain them. It should be remembered that the orbit of Jupiter encloses that of the earth, and

“The time that light takes to traverse space has been calculated to be that of one minute for every 12,000,000 miles, or 192,000 miles in each second of time. It is found, therefore, that to traverse a distance equal to the entire diameter of the earth’s orbit, or 190,000,000 miles, it would take about sixteen minutes; in the same way it takes one second and a quarter to go from the moon to the

when the two planets happen to be on the same side of the sun, and in a straight line passing through that orb, they are then at their least distance from each other, and are said to be in conjunction. Now, suppose Jupiter to remain stationary, at the end of half a year the earth will have reached the opposite point of her orbit, and will now be more distant from Jupiter by an amount equal to the diameter of her orbit, or nearly 200,000,000 miles. Retaining carefully those positions in the mind, we shall follow the facts about to be presented with the greatest ease.

“It was found that those eclipses of Jupiter’s satellites, which occurred while the earth and planet were at their least distance from each other, always came on *sooner* than the time predicted by the tables; while, on the contrary, those which took place when the planets were most remote from each other, occurred *later* than the computed time. A still more extended examination of these remarkable phenomena demonstrated the fact, that the discrepancies depended evidently on the absolute increase and decrease of distance which marked the relative position of the planets in their revolutions around the sun. For a long time no explanation of these undeniable truths could be found, until the mystery was finally solved by Rømer, a Danish astronomer, who, with admirable sagacity, traced these irregularities to their true source, and found that they arose from the fact that light travelled through space with a finite and measurable velocity.

“The explanation is simple. When Jupiter and the earth are at their least distance from each other, the stream of light flowing from the satellite of the great planet traverses a shorter space to reach the eye of the observer on the earth, by nearly 200,000,000 miles, than when the planets are most remote from each other.

earth (which is about 96,109 astronomical leagues from her satellite); eight minutes thirteen seconds to arrive at the earth from the sun (which is about 37,000,000 leagues); fifty-two minutes to arrive from Jupiter (which is about 155,000,000); two hours to arrive from Uranus (which is about 666,000,000); and three hours to arrive from Neptune (which is 1,073,000,000 leagues) from your planet.

In case, therefore, this stream is in any way cut off, it will run out sooner in the first than in the second position, by the time required to pass over the diameter of the earth's orbit. The stream of light is actually shorter, by 200,000,000 miles, in the first than in the second position of the planets.

"Now, the satellites of Jupiter receive their light from the sun; they reflect this light to the earth, and when the body of their primary is interposed between them and their source of light, they are eclipsed; their light is cut off; its flow is interrupted; and when the stream of light starting from them at the instant the supply is cut off shall have run out, then, and not till then, does the satellite become invisible. This explanation accounts for all the phenomena in the most beautiful manner.

"The tables had been constructed from the mean of a great number of observed eclipses. Hence, those which took place while Jupiter and the earth were near each other, would happen earlier than predicted; while those taking place when the planets were at their greatest distance, would occur later than the time given by the tables. But the velocity with which this mysterious, subtle, intangible substance called light, flew through the regions of space, as determined by this wonderful theory, was so great as to startle the minds of even its strongest advocates, and to demand the most positive testimony to induce the belief of those disposed to scepticism. It was found to traverse a distance equal to the entire diameter of the earth's orbit, or 190,000,000 miles, in about sixteen minutes! giving a velocity of 12,000,000 miles per minute, or 192,000 miles (77,000 astronomical leagues) in each second of time!"—*The Orbs of Heaven*, by O. M. Mitchell, A.M.



“ This is the reason, Conchita, that we do not see the stars such as *they are*, but such as *they were* at the moment when the luminous rays which we see, proceeded from them. If a volcano, for instance, was to burst out in Jupiter, the inhabitants of the earth would only see it two hours afterwards.

“ Thus you perceive that light does not travel by any means as fast as thought, and that the farther you go from a star the longer time does its light take to reach you. The luminous rays, for instance, of the star nearest to your earth (the alpha of the Centaur) takes three years and eight months to traverse the 8,376,800 million leagues which are between it and the world. The farther you go from the earth, the longer time will its rays take to reach you ; if you go to Sirius, for instance, the most beautiful of all stars, you will only see your poor little earth as it appeared fourteen years and two months before, because its rays can only reach you in that time on account of the enormous distance which divides you.

“ Now, as at present, we are, as I have told you, in Arabel, one of the planets belonging to the star Vega or alpha of the Lyre, which is 50,830,000 million leagues from the earth, you must not be astonished to learn that it takes nearly twenty-one years and three months, for the rays of your old home to reach your new habitation. So that when you look upon it you see,



not the city you have just left but the city of twenty-one years ago.

“Thus you see, my dear daughter, that the past is always present to the free spirits, and that they have only to go far enough from the earth to see once more any particular act of their lives, no matter how remote.”

“Now I understand how it is that I see before me Madrid as it was at the time of my birth, just twenty-one years ago, which is precisely the time which its rays take to reach Arabel, where I now stand. But what I cannot yet understand, my father, is, how I could have travelled even faster than light, so as to have reached my new home even before the very luminous rays which emanate from the sun, to which it appertains.”

He smiled kindly upon me and then said :

“You always forget that you are a free spirit, and as such, independent of all the laws of matter. Light is a material element, and is regulated by time and space, but you are a spirit, and depend therefore, on the spiritual laws, which do not recognise either time or space. Spirits travel with the velocity of thought, and they arrive at their destination all the sooner when they desire it, and later when they have less desire ; the way itself being lengthened or shortened according to their desire. This may be illustrated by the thoughts of man, for whatever he views intensely

in thought he sees before him as present. He who reflects, also knows that neither does his sight take account of space, except from the intermediate objects on the earth which he sees at the same time ; now in the spirit world, as you know already, the spirit only sees what it wants to see, and therefore no intermediate objects are in the way to point out to it the distance of the particular object its attention is fixed upon."

"Now I think I can understand the reality of this curious fact; but it is indeed strange, oh, my father! that in the year 1871 I should see what happened in the year 1850."

"It is one of the laws of light which, as yet, is unknown to the astronomers of the little world from which you come ; and yet the physical law of the successive transmission of light is the fundamental element of the conditions of our future life. Every spirit when he dies, sees by this means, his own life over again; he has only to go a few leagues into space, away from the earth, to catch the rays of light which carry into eternity the photographic image of every one of his actions.

"Thus you see, my child, that nothing is ever forgotten, no good action is ever lost, no crime ever remains unpunished, for light, with a velocity of 77,000 leagues a second, carries the exact photograph, so to speak, of every one of our actions into the unsoundable depths of eternity.

“What spirits dread the most, my child, is to see over again the crimes they have committed during their earthly lives; and God punishes them sometimes with a constant view of those crimes. For this they are obliged to travel through space, with a velocity equal to that of light, and they have for ever before their eyes that particular action of their life which was committed at the moment when the ray of light, in company with which they are travelling, left the world. All the horrors of Dante’s imaginary hell put together, I can tell you, my Conchita, are not comparable to this reality; for this is a spiritual punishment which even our all-merciful Father finds sometimes necessary to inflict upon His disobedient and sinful children.

“But it is not only an earthly life which spirits see over again as they travel through space, but all their previous lives, all their numerous material existences; for, as you know Conchita, our spirits before being last incarnated upon the earth, had already gone through many other earthly existences, the actions of every one of which are at present travelling through space.”

“The universe must be, then, of prodigious size, if it is possible for a ray of light which, as you say, traverses 192,000 miles (77,000 leagues) every second of time, to travel for ages in one direction and always with the same velocity,” I said, as I cast an inquisitive look towards the

sparkling Milky Way, which shone in the distant blue firmament, even as it does for the inhabitants of the earth.

“The universe,” he answered, “cannot be called of prodigious size. It has no size, it is infinite; and I assert this, because it is impossible to conceive any limits to space; and that, however difficult it may be to conceive of infinity, it is easier to go on for ever in thought through space, than to stop short at any supposed point of the universe, however distant, beyond which there would be no more space to traverse.

“To show you, however, how immense is the universe, I will tell you that there exist myriads of stars whose light can only reach us after millions and millions of years of incessant travelling at the rate of 192,000 miles (77,000 leagues) per second. The light of those stars which you see over your head, belonging to the Milky Way, takes 15,000 years to reach us. Thus the stars you see now are not those of to-day, but those of 15,000 years ago.

“If you meditate on these facts, you will easily form an idea of the immensity of the universe, and I am sure you will finish by saying that space is infinite.”

Here I ended my interesting view with my father. I have related it to you, Walter, as well as I could remember it, so as best to prove to you



that the star I had seen from Arabel was really this earth, and that the Madrid I then inspected was the Madrid of twenty years ago, and not a vision caused by the vivid recollections of my early youth, as I had at first imagined.

## VI.

“To doubt, and to be astonished, is to recognise our ignorance. Hence it is that the lover of wisdom is, in a certain way, a lover of myths, for the subject of myths is the astonishing and marvellous.”—SIR W. HAMILTON (after Aristotle).

*Walter.* “What you tell me, my dearest wife, is really astonishing. I do not think I could ever have believed such an extraordinary vision to be a true fact, proved by the recognised laws of science. I have often heard it said that in this world there is no present, for as soon as you say the word it belongs to the past; but, according to your father, in the spirit-world there seems to be no past. This is indeed a new theory, and one which, if generally known by men, would occasion many disputes and many debates.”

*Conchita.* “In the earth, Walter, as my father truly remarked, you are as yet ignorant of half the most essential laws of nature. But the day will come when physical science will discover in light the principle of all movement and of all existing things. The spectro-analysis, only lately discovered upon your world, has already taught you to see in the luminous rays of the sun and the stars, the substances which constitute them. By this means you can determine, through a distance

of millions of leagues, the nature of the celestial bodies of which you receive the luminous rays ! Can you wonder, after this, at the truth of what my father said respecting this same light ? ”

*Walter.* “ There is one objection, however, which seems to me to stand still in the way of his theory.”

*Conchita.* “ And what is that ? Perhaps I may be able to explain it, and make it clear for you.”

*Walter.* “ You say that from the world of Arabel you saw distinctly not only the earth, but its continents, and oceans, its cities, and even its inhabitants, and all this in the luminous rays which proceeded from it. How could this be ? ”

*Conchita.* “ In the same way that astronomers are able to determine, by means of the luminous rays proceeding from the stars, their nature, and the elements of which they are composed, are we able to see all that is passing on the planet at the moment that that particular ray of light issued from it, by means of spectro-analysis.”

*Walter.* “ But the earth is an opaque body, it has no light of its own, and cannot, therefore, throw off any luminous rays.”

*Conchita.* “ You forget that it reflects, like all planets, those of the sun, the same as a looking-glass reflects the lighted candle before it ; and thus sends them back again into space stamped with the photograph of what was going on at the time on its surface.”

*Walter.* "I see you are able to answer all my objections, so I will not trouble you with any more. How happy you must be, Conchita, to be thus able to know all things, and see all things past as well as present! What are, indeed, all the pleasures and joys of the material world compared to your intellectual and spiritual existence! Matter, indeed—coarse and heavy matter—while your enjoyments are purely spiritual! Oh! if I could but be with you in that brilliant world of yours, away from the earth, and free from its corruptions and ties! A spirit, free to come and go, and free to love you as an equal, and as a husband once more."

*Conchita.* "The day will soon come when your wish will be realised—soon, ay, sooner than you imagine!—but you have still a mission to perform on earth. . . . Raphael, our child . . . . he is alone . . . . abandoned. . . . Ah! if you but knew how you have been connected in the past, you would not now abandon him to the care of strangers. He is your son, however—and my son. Oh, Walter, do not forget that! Until our child is educated and able to take care of himself, you must remain on earth to watch over him. Until then you will not be free to come to my celestial home to the arms of your loving Conchita! But I see the sun is already announcing his approach at the golden gates of the Eastern Hemisphere, and the beautiful Venus is gradually



losing her brilliancy. I must leave you, for I too have my duties and my tasks to perform."

*Walter.* "So soon!—so soon! Ah, Conchita! you know I only live now for you; you know that after this glimpse of heaven, the earth will seem a very hell to me. Do not go, or if you must, promise me, before going, that you will come again soon—to-morrow."

*Conchita.* "I will. But do not think that, in the meantime, I shall leave you; I will be constantly near you in spirit. For even when I am amongst the distant stars of the Milky Way, millions and millions of leagues from the earth, I am by your side in thought. Now, farewell, oh, my husband! May hope, faith, and love, remain always with you."

And she was gone!

How she went I cannot tell. As her last sweet and cheering words sounded on the thin morning air, and disappeared from it, so had she also vanished. Conchita was no longer by my side; as useless would it have been to strain my ears to catch some lingering echo of her voice, as to strain my eyes in the vain hope of seeing some shadow of her form.

I looked upwards to the bright, clear sky, from which the stars were fading fast; thitherward had my sweet spirit soared; of that I was aware; and as long as a star remained I continued to gaze. But as the last one disappeared as she had

done, effaced, as it were, from the sky by the bright effulgence of the coming day, I buried my head in my hands, and felt utterly alone.

As I thus stood for a few moments giving way to the blankness of despair, a new feeling came over me—like a ray of hope which grew and grew, till my whole being was warmed and cheered by it—as was the dark earth on which I dwelt by the bright rays of the rising sun. The sun of my life had disappeared at its approach, but would gladden my eyes and cheer my heart again, as the orb of day should again disappear, and leave the earth in the darkness of the night—darkness such as had crept over my heart. Of this she had assured me ; and I felt I must do as the earth did, and patiently await her promised return in the calm repose of silence and sleep.

I therefore hastened to my neglected couch, and was not long before a sweet drowsiness overpowered me.

## NIGHT THE SECOND.



“ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,  
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”—JOHN iii.





## NIGHT THE SECOND.

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### I.

“ When the moon is on the wave,  
And the glow-worm in the grass,  
And the meteor on the grave,  
And the wisp on the morass ;  
When the falling stars are shooting,  
And the answer'd owls are hooting,  
And the silent leaves are still  
In the shadow of the hill :  
Shall my soul be upon thine,  
With a power and with a sign.”

LORD BYRON.

THE sun was high in the heavens, when I awoke, and threw open the Venetian blinds of my large window to admit the refreshing sea breeze. How bright was all outside, as I gazed again on the glittering bay, with its little dancing waves, which seemed to leap for very joy as the sun shone on them ! All was busy life. The ferry steamers were plying to and fro ; several large ships had arrived since daybreak, and gay colours were floating from their masts ; the white sails of another were spreading to the breeze, as she was slowly passing out to gain the open sea, and try her fortunes once more upon its treacherous

breast. Warm hearts were beating with joy on her deck at the prospect of returning to their native land; and perhaps some were sinking with sorrow from parting with dear ones in the land they were leaving. Such is life on this sad earth; the smile and the tear are ever side by side.

Before me was the large dismantled ship, in which the brilliant ball had been held the night before; hundreds of sailors and other men were busily at work in clearing away, and making her look again more ship-shape; but the awning, under which I had left Lilian Leigh, when I had fled from her side, was still untouched, and the sight of it brought my adventures of the night most vividly to my memory. What had become of her? Had she returned with heavy heart to the ball-room, when I had left her?—was she now convinced that I had no heart to give?—and would she let sorrow and concealment prey on her damask cheek, or would she revive the delicate tint of that fair cheek by natural or artificial means, and smile on some one more worthy of her blandishments? I could not tell;—and the thought was no sooner conceived than it was gone, to give place to a far deeper emotion, as I thought of my beautiful spirit-love, the darling wife who had so lately stood on that spot by my side. Or could it have been a dream—a wild, enthusiastic, impossible dream? O God! if such after all should prove to be the case! Could it be possible that

I had been dreaming? And then I regretted that I had nothing to prove, even to myself, that she had really been there! If I had but asked for a lock of her hair, or a morsel of her white veil, I could then have gazed at the memento, until convinced of the reality, of what now every moment that I thought of it, seemed to me more and more like an elaborate dream. Involuntarily I turned my eyes to the marble pavement of the balcony where she had stood; but those light spirit-feet had left no trace, her angel visit was recorded alone in my memory and my heart; and if these—if these were but keeping the records of a dream, I should indeed be of all men the most miserable.

My brain spun round at the thought, and my head throbbed so violently, I was obliged to return to my couch, where I passed the rest of the day, for I could not bear to meet any of my fellow-creatures again, until the next night should have brought me the certainty of conviction, and taken me out of this horrible suspense. How could I again meet Lilian Leigh, and indulge with her in commonplace sentiment? or talk with the Herberts over the frivolities of a ball-room? I could not, and would not, drown my thoughts and my reason as some men would have done: I preferred to endure them—in solitary misery? No; for hope was ever uppermost in my mind. The more I reflected upon the wonderful visit

I had received from the inhabitant of another world, the more wonderful did it appear. But then again a thousand tales had come to my ears lately, which seemed to confirm the possibility of such communion. Since my visit to the medium in New York, I had become a subscriber to the great Spiritualist paper, *The Banner of Light*; and its columns were full of such wonders occurring from time to time both in America and in England. Indeed, could I not myself bear witness to the truth of these statements, for had I not beheld my own lost love in New York through the mediumship of Dr Slade? It was only then one step more wonderful that she should now be able to manifest herself to me without any medium at all, or rather—for that could not be—that an unsuspected mediumistic power had lately been developed in me. Through what unknown and extraordinary process? Ay, who can tell? But that there are such people as mediums, who can doubt? Has not a book been greatly circulated in France, called “*Le Livre des Mediums*,” written by the celebrated Allan Kardec, a man of great ability, and who had long been known as an indefatigable writer, not of fictions, but on chemistry, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, and other positive sciences? and, above all, had he not been crowned by the Royal Academy of Arts for a celebrated treatise on a question of a “System of Studies most in Harmony with the Necessities of the



Age ? ” Was this the man who would lend his name to folly and deception ? and not only his name, but who would devote his precious time, nay, long years of his life, to the study and the elucidation of a glaring absurdity and delusion, and thus contribute to make others take part in the folly ? It would have been wilfully to have attempted to deceive his fellow-beings ; and the whole course of his previous life had been notoriously devoted to their instruction and improvement ; for, ever desirous of rendering the process of instruction agreeable and interesting, all his works had tended to that effect ; and even in his earliest years, when at college, he was celebrated for philanthropically teaching all he knew to those fellow-students who had acquired less than himself.

About the year 1850, when first the spiritual manifestations began to be spoken about, Allan Kardec had devoted himself to the most persevering observation of the phenomena, limiting himself principally to the elucidation of the philosophical consequences to be deduced from it. He had been thus able to perceive from the very first the dawning of new natural laws,—new, inasmuch as they had not yet been observed or studied ; laws that regulate the relations of the visible world with the invisible,—recognising in the action of the latter, one of the forces of nature, the knowledge of which would throw light on an endless number of problems considered unsolvable, and

which had hitherto only been regarded from a religious point of view.

By the study of effects we mount to the appreciation of causes. In the order of studies united under the generic denomination of spiritualism the facts exist. But no one knows as yet the manner of their production. They exist quite as decidedly as the electric, luminous, and caloric phenomena, but we are as ignorant of the laws that govern them as we are of the essence of electricity and of the essence of light.

Allan Kardec was therefore continuing to act as the wise and high-souled benefactor of humanity he had always shown himself to be, when he devoted himself with so much patience and perseverance to the endeavour to discover these laws which are likely to throw so much light on all the anomalies of human life; as through them man will be better able to comprehend whence he comes, whither he goes, for what purpose he is on the earth, and why he but too often suffers upon it.

The true knowledge of spiritualism dates from the appearance of his "*Livre des Esprits*." It became a science which, until then, had only possessed stray elements scattered about without any co-ordination, and whose depths could not be comprehended by every one. From that moment the doctrine fixed the attention of serious and reflective minds, and was rapidly developed on the

Continent. The book has been, I believe, through twenty editions in French, and has been translated into nearly every Continental and some Eastern languages. I knew that in Spain it had attained to its sixth edition some time ago.

It is true that Allan Kardec, who, from the number and importance of the books he compiled on the subject, may be considered as the great master-mind on this particular study, has left us no record of the spiritual appearances, or, as they are called, *materialisations*, with which the different spiritualistic journals, both in England and America, are teeming at this moment; but that is because the phenomena have been very gradual, and when he wrote had not yet reached the higher point they have now attained.

From the little tap on the table, which first brought conviction and certainty to the mind that doubted of the continued existence of the dear ones gone before, we have now reached the materialisation of the perfect form and feature, and can in some cases communicate with those dear ones face to face; hear again the beloved voice, and feel again the warm clasp of the dear hand, which is no longer mouldering in the coffin, but whose pulses are still beating with the warmth and fervour of our own. So at least we are assured, not by the mere wonder-seekers of the hour, but by serious and enquiring scientific men,



who vouch for their assertions with the weight of their own well-known names, after repeated experiments of all kinds, made with scientific tests and instruments.

Allan Kardec has been succeeded in his philosophical researches after truth, by such well-known scientific men as Alfred Wallace, F.R.S., one of the foremost naturalists of the day, standing next to Darwin as an elucidator of the doctrine of evolution; Professor Crookes, F.R.S., editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*; C. T. Varley, F.R.S., the electrician of the Atlantic cable; to say nothing of Judge Edmonds, Robert Dale Owen, Epes Sargent, and a host of other important names, both in England and America, who vouch for the genuineness of these spirit-forms and spirit-voices.

Why then, should I doubt the evidence of my own senses, and break my heart, and agonise my mind, by permitting these doubts to continue for a moment longer of the reality of the beautiful vision I had experienced the previous night? If such angel visitors from a brighter sphere had appeared to others, and had been testified to by men of such good sense, calm judgment, and cautious observation, as I have named, why should I refuse to believe in the reality of the return of my own lost love? She, at least, had had a powerful motive to return; for have we not often heard before, that love is stronger than the grave? Her love, then, had been able to overcome all obstacles, and since



she had conquered them once, she could and would conquer them again.

Thus I reasoned with myself throughout that long, long, day. Many messages and kind enquiries were sent to me during its course from Lilian Leigh, and from my kind friends the Herberts, who feared from my long seclusion that I must be seriously ill ; but I pleaded a nervous headache, and preserved that solitary seclusion all day long ; and merely partook of a slight repast provided for me by the kind care of Mrs Herbert, and a cup of delicious iced lemonade, which I was told by my servant that kind lady had prepared for me with her own fair hands.

How I watched the glorious sun as he sunk into his rich bed of crimson and gold in the glowing western sky ; and how I welcomed the first pale glistening star as it twinkled into sight in the darkening mists of evening. I could not tear myself away from the balcony, but stood, and stood, until I could stand no longer. Then I drew forward the large American rocking-chair, and, lighting a cigar, I resigned myself to the soothing influence of both these luxuries, whilst I watched the silent heavens, and awaited the appearance of the beautiful star of my destiny, that would set my doubts and fears at rest, and give me positive proof of the glorious future that awaited me, when this mortal should put away its mortality.

Star after star shone out, till the night was no longer dark, but brilliantly beautiful, as those have never seen it who have not been in the tropics, and gazed on a tropical sky ; the air was soft and balmy ; every sound was hushed to rest in the busy city, save from time to time a soft and beautiful gust of distant melody wafted to my ear by the evening breeze, so soft, so distant, and so melodious, that it might have come from some bright star. Now and then the regular stroke of some boatman's oars would disturb the stillness of the midnight ; otherwise all was hushed except the usual voices of the night, the monotonous hum of the busy insects in the thick trees of the Alameda beneath my balcony, and the little splash, splash, of the tiny waves, as they broke against its side, which soon ended by lulling me to a sweet repose. The last ashes of the cigar had fallen from my hand when my head began to feel the soothing influence of those soft and regular sounds, and at last fell back on the chair as my eyes closed in gentle slumber.

How long I slept I cannot tell, I was awoke by the soft pressure of a kiss on my brow, and the still softer murmur of that well-known voice which gently whispered the precious words I had so yearned to hear.

" My husband ! my darling, darling Walter, I am again at your side, I have been with you often during the day that has seemed so long to

you ; have you not felt my warm breath on your cheek, or its soft rustling on your hair ? I could not show myself to you, for the daylight is too positive for spirit power—which requires the negative qualities that come with the darkness of the night, when dew descends on the earth, and its emanations are no longer drawn upwards by the powerful rays of light. Walter, dear one, I have kept my promise ; and here you have me once more by your side, faithful to my word.”

## II.

“Wait, darling, wait!

You have reached the heavenly strand;  
But one you love is toiling up,  
To the height of a better land.

“Oh! pause by the shining gates of pearl,  
Look down the narrow way;  
And guide me, by your angel hand,  
Into a perfect day.”

*Walter.* “Thank God! thank God! It was no dream, for I once more behold you, my own dear love. God alone knows how much I have suffered during this long day. You say you have been often near me, and doubtless it was the sweet influence of your presence that brought me those happy gleams of hope that have sustained me through those weary hours of suspense and doubt; but now I once more begin to live, now that I see your beloved form again, and hear the low murmur of your angel voice, dear wife! You who are my sun, my life. Ah, Conchita! how empty and unmeaning the world appears to me, now that I must look elsewhere for you. Oh, forgive me, if for one moment I ever forgot our old love, and indulged in a senseless flirtation



with Lilian Leigh ; how you must hate her, and how you must despise me !”

*Conchita.* “I bear no ill-will towards her, Walter ; although she is but a worldly coquette, and a cold schemer. I would have been sorry to have seen you fall a victim to her calculating fascinations ; but I am not jealous of her, for I know you could never have loved her.”

*Walter.* “I have been thinking, my dearest Conchita, and turning over in my mind the extraordinary facts you told me last night. At first I could hardly credit them, although it was you, my angel, who had told me of them. But I have been meditating on them all day, and now I think I can understand all their truth. I can quite believe now, how it was, that finding yourself in the system of Vega, so many millions of miles away from the earth, you saw our little planet, not as it appeared in June 1871, the date of your death, but such as it was in March 1850, because its rays take twenty-one years and three months to traverse the 50,830,000 millions of astronomical leagues, which divide the earth from the star Vega, or Alpha of the Lyre. And that, although in itself an obscure body, the earth shines in space, as does its satellite the moon, by means of the light reflected on it by the sun.

“I will not enter into any investigation as to

the much disputed theory of light ; whether it be an actual emanation from a luminous body of material particles, or whether it be a mere vibratory or undulatory motion produced by luminous bodies on some ethereal medium. My only object is to agree to the undoubted fact, that light takes a certain time to travel through space ; and that in case a luminous body were to be suddenly called into existence, and located in space at the distance of 12,000,000 miles from the eye of an observer, who was on the look-out for its light, this light would not reach him until one minute after the creation of the object ; and should it suddenly be struck from existence, the same observer would behold it for one minute after its extinction.

“ After this I can easily understand how it is that, as the events which take place in Neptune would only be seen by the inhabitants of this earth three hours after their occurrence, in the same way those of the earth are only seen in Vega and its system of worlds, twenty-one years and three months afterwards.

“ At last I have begun to realise that the extraordinary phenomena you witnessed, was neither a vision, nor the effects of memory, nor even a supernatural and miraculous act, but a positive and natural fact. So you see, my Conchita, that your revelations are not lost upon me, although I do not see all their truth at first, as I should if I

were a disembodied spirit such as you are ; free from the limitations of materiality."

*Conchita.* "To-night I intend to relate to you what befell me after the interesting conversation I had with my father ; and which I repeated to you last evening.

"As you know, I was in the planet Arabel, one of those belonging to the star Vega. I was yet standing on the same mountain upon which he left me, and my eyes were still fixed upon that little dew-drop in space, which had been my home for twenty-one years, and which still possessed such an attraction for my soul.

"I saw before me the city of Madrid ; and as I have already told you, the good old capital presented the same aspect it had in the beginning of the year 1850, the date of my birth.

"My anxious eyes were fixed upon the heights of the Buen Retiro, those superb and shady gardens on the other side of the Prado, in which I used to play when a child by the side of my Biscayan nurse, in her picturesque costume. As I gazed upon them, vivid and distant recollections of my childhood, which I had long ago forgotten, flashed through my mind. I remembered the old nurse with her showy dress, covered with gold and velvet bands, and every button of which was a little golden dollar, brilliant as the light of day. I remembered her white lace handkerchief, so curiously twisted



round her head, and the large Basque ear-rings which hung from her ears. As all these recollections of my early days passed through my mind, I noticed a group of children who, accompanied by their nurses, were running under the shady avenues near the lake. My attention was drawn towards them, I inspected their white frocks, now crumpled and soiled with earth, their bright rosy faces and their long golden locks ; when what was my surprise to recognise in one of these children . . . myself ! ”

*Walter.* “ Yourself ? ”

*Conchita.* “ Yes, myself, a little girl two years old, running about by the side of my nurse. You may imagine how surprised I was, how taken back. But there was no doubting the evidence of my own eyes. There I was, as large as life, in the same place where I had been nineteen years before.”

*Walter.* “ My dear Conchita, what you are telling me is impossible. You cannot be in two places at the same time : you cannot turn into two individualities. It would be impossible for any one to see a thing which no longer exists. You could not have been a woman of twenty-one in the planet Arabel, and at the same time a child of two, upon the earth.”

*Conchita.* “ It strikes me, Walter, that you jump at conclusions without giving them a moment’s consideration. If you reflect upon it for a moment, you will find the fact I have just



told you to be but the natural consequence of the truth you have just admitted. You agree that the rays from the earth take twenty-one years to arrive at Vega ; that the events which take place upon its surface can only reach my new home in that space of time ; in a word, you admit that I saw the world from that star, such as it appeared twenty-one years ago. You also admit that I saw the streets such as they were in those days, and the people who crowded them. You admit all this ?”

*Walter.* “I am obliged to admit all that, because I now see it to be nothing more nor less than the natural consequence of the time employed by light to travel through space.”

*Conchita.* “Very well. But if I saw a crowd of children running through the avenues of the Retiro—children who lived twenty-one years ago, just when I too was a child—is it not natural that I should see myself amongst them ?”

*Walter.* “But you forget that you no longer form part of those children ; you forget that you are a spirit now, an inhabitant of another planet.”

*Conchita.* “I do not deny that for a moment. The children I saw before me are also grown up men and women by this time. None of them are now children, and yet I see them as such whenever I like. Because the earth I have before my eyes is not the earth of to-day, but the earth of twenty-one years ago. As I was at that time a child, playing

with the others in the gardens near Madrid, I do not perceive why I should not see myself as well as I see the others. I see a great many girls. Why should I not also see the little girl who was myself?"

*Walter.* "I must say that your arguments are most conclusive, although your theory is rather bewildering. Of course it is evident, that if you saw your companions, there is no reason why you should not see yourself. But, pray, go on with your adventures. I feel too much interested in them to interrupt you again. Besides, I know that you have a reason for everything you say."

*Conchita.* "As I have told you then, I first saw myself a little girl, playing with other little girls in the beautiful gardens of the Retiro. After this, I frequently saw myself.

"I saw myself, when yet a little child, taken for the first time to the Opera. I saw myself driving about with my mother in the Fuente Castellana, and saw over again hundreds of other little events of my young life.

"Then a great gloom fell upon the house. My father had been wounded in action, and was brought home in a dying state. I once more witnessed his death, and again I beheld the sorrow of my mother. I saw myself, a mere child, trying to console her, and dry her tears with my kisses. I heard her curse the Carlist invaders, who had

murdered her husband and left me an orphan. I witnessed all these sad scenes once more. How they all came to my mind, when I saw them so plainly before me—even the smallest details I had long ago forgotten! And new tears came to my eyes, as I beheld this sad episode of my earthly life over again.

“Shortly afterwards, we left Madrid for the South. I saw the lumbering diligence, which was taking us to our new home; for in those days there was no railway. We passed over the mountains near Toledo; and then I once more spent days and days on the plains of the Mancha, shut up in a small coupé by the side of my mother, whose black garments showed only too plainly the great loss we had sustained.

“At last we reached the smiling valleys of Andalusia; green fields and a rich vegetation succeeded to the dreary wilderness of La Mancha, nature seemed to smile again upon us, and my youthful heart beat once more with joy and hope.

“We arrived at Seville; I saw once again the ancient city, the gorgeous Alcazar, and the superb Cathedral. I saw myself standing on the top of the Giralda, and looking up towards the very point in the sky from which I now beheld myself. *I met my own gaze!* Ah, Walter! you cannot imagine what an extraordinary effect this had upon me.

“I was soon afterwards taken to the convent on



the other side of the Guadalquivir, near Triana, at which I was to be educated, and where I was to spend so many years of my short life.

“The monotonous routine of the convent now succeeded to my life of adventures. Once more I strolled by the banks of the beautiful river with my young companions; once more I knelt before the ancient altar of the church; and, in one word, I went through my school girl’s life over again; seeing myself gradually growing up, from a child to a woman.

“Then came the great event of my young girl’s life. My mother came to see me one morning accompanied by a foreigner, an Englishman. This caused a great commotion amongst the girls, who were watching him from behind the iron railings of the locatory; and they all pronounced him the handsomest man they had ever seen. Poor girls! the greater part of them had never seen a man at all, excepting the old doctor, or the one-eyed gardener of the convent!

“I came out and was introduced to the handsome stranger. . . . It was yourself. From that moment all my thoughts were devoted to you, you became the object of all my wild speculations, and the hero of all my dreams. My heart seemed to have been expecting you, for you took possession of it from the very first moment I saw you.

“Shortly afterwards I left the convent. I was



presented to the Infanta, Duchess of Montpensier, in her beautiful palace of San Telmo, and the next day I went to my first ball, which was given by the Countess of Fuencarral in my honour. There I met you once more. I danced my first waltz with you—the first waltz I had ever danced with one who was not of my own sex—and from that moment our intimacy grew greater and greater.

“I loved you, Walter! Ah! even from Vega I could see how that girl of nineteen summers loved the noble, manly Englishman who pressed her to his heart!

“It was, indeed, a new sensation to see you embracing what to me seemed a ghost of myself!

“For some time I thought you would not ask my hand—I was so afraid you would go back to your country and forget the poor young girl at Seville who loved you so much!

“But you *did* sue for it, and we were married. Once more I travelled through Spain, but this time it was in the railway, and by your side. I saw again the lovely spots in the Scottish Highlands where our happy honeymoon had been spent. I saw myself by your side standing on the banks of Loch Lomond, and felt happy once more in witnessing my past joys.

“I followed on my existence during the short years I was your wife. I followed it closely, fearing to lose one single instant of my past happiness. At last the moment arrived which

was to be my last ; and strange, marvellous . . . most wonderful of all, I had come back upon the earth, and there I stood by the side of my bed watching my new-born infant.

“ Attracted by the all-absorbing contemplation of my life, my soul had soon forgotten Arabel and Vega. And as spirits travel as fast as thought, I had gradually come nearer and nearer to the earth, and thus I had seen the whole of my past life in less than a day ; and I entered once more my bed-chamber before the cold corpse which had been my earthly envelope had been removed from it to its final resting-place, the family vault in the old church, near Carlton Hall.”

### III.

And Abaris, so far from esteeming Pythagoras, who taught these things, a necromancer or a wizard, rather revered and admired him as something divine.

JAMBLICH, *Vit. Pythag.*

*Walter.*—"You found yourself again upon the earth?"

*Conchita.*—"Yes, Walter."

*Walter.*—"Then, my dearest Conchita, I must once more ask you for an explanation, for I really cannot comprehend your meaning. You say that the light from the earth takes twenty-one years to reach Arabel, and at the same time you tell me that you saw the whole of your earth life in less than a day; this seems a contradiction. If it was the real course of your life that you were following from the beautiful system of Vega, surely, in virtue of the time necessary for light to traverse space, you must, at least, have employed twenty-one years to see the twenty-one years of your earthly career. If in the year 1871 you saw the earth as it appeared in 1850, surely the luminous rays of 1871 could not possibly reach you before 1893, because the light of our sun, as you have told me yourself, takes twenty-one years to arrive at that distant system of worlds."

*Conchita*.—"I see by that argument, Walter, that you quite understand the laws of light, I have been trying to teach you. This would indeed have been the case if I had remained in the system of Vega; the luminous rays from your earth could not have reached me in less than twenty-one years; but you forget that I am a free spirit, and that I travel as fast as thought.

"As I fixed my attention on the earth, my spirit was attracted towards it, and ended by gradually drawing me back to my old home.

"As in this return voyage, I went faster than light, I received the earthly impressions—if I may give them this name—before they had time to reach Vega and its system of worlds. In the middle of my voyage, the light from the earth reached me in ten years, and as I advanced towards it, the time, of course, grew shorter and shorter; when I arrived at the sun, I saw the earth as it appeared only eight minutes before, and when at last I touched the earth, as light had no distance to travel before reaching me, I beheld the events as they were taking place. Thus, you see, my dear husband, that I was able to view over again my whole existence, in the short space that thought takes to carry a spirit to Vega and back."

*Walter*.—"Oh forgive me, my beautiful angel, if I always forget, that, being free from all material hindrances, you are able to travel



through the universe with the rapidity of thought."

*Conchita.*—"What I have told you is not any wonderful event as you may at first imagine, but a natural consequence of spirit life. Every man, after his death, sees in the same way by which I saw the whole course of my earthly life over again. This, as you may imagine, is a great punishment to the wicked, who do not see it quickly as I did, but who are condemned by the just Creator to contemplate for a certain length of time (ages, in some cases), every bad action of their lives, in order that, having their crimes constantly before them, they may learn to comprehend their wickedness, and repent before entering into the full possession of their spiritual powers. Being of the earth earthy, their whole soul is yet concentrated upon the material world; and thus, even in the world of spirits, they cannot remove their thoughts or their eyes from the material hemisphere, in which they still exist in spirit, and have their being."

## IV.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

WORDSWORTH (*Ode to Immortality*).

Il n'est pas plus surprenant de naître deux fois qu'une; tout est résurrection dans la nature.—VOLTAIRE (*Princesse de Babylone*).

*Walter*.—"Can you, my Conchita! who seem to know everything, explain to me the great mystery of life? You have lifted the dark veil which stood before me and eternity; you have unfolded to me the great mystery of death, which no living man had yet been permitted to unravel; can you not also explain to me the mystery of life; which is hidden from mankind by a veil thicker even than that which veils death from our material gaze?"

*Conchita*.—"I am not all-wise as you suppose, Walter; like Newton I seem but to have picked up a pebble by the sea-shore; for there exist millions of things which still are mysteries to me, but much I can tell you that you would like to know; for my spirit is now liberated from its former earthly trammels, and can wander through the spheres and learn to appreciate the laws of God; not to

their full extent,—but to the extent of its capabilities of comprehending and receiving them.”

*Walter*.—“Can you tell me then, how it is that there are good men and bad men in the world? Can you tell me how it is that life to some is heaven, while to many others it is more like hell? Can you tell me why some children are born with great minds, independent of all education; and others are born little more than mere fools? Can you tell me why there are savages and civilised men; why some men are born to be bought and sold as slaves, and others to rule as kings upon a golden throne? Can you tell me the why and the wherefore of all these things? Is God just in permitting them?”

*Conchita*.—“What to you appears such a great mystery, Walter, is but a natural consequence of the laws of progress; and if you knew these laws your whole soul would overflow with loving feelings of admiration for the sublime wisdom of the Creator, whose justice you now so wrongly question in your gross ignorance of those laws.”

*Walter*.—“Of what laws do you speak? Is there a law that rules life? A law as arbitrary and unchangeable as those which rule the course of the stars?”

*Conchita*.—“There is. And as I last night told you, the spiritual world is, like the material universe, ruled by certain laws; unchangeable, immutable, wise, just, and eternal as the Creator

Himself. The laws that govern the spirit are similar in a certain way to the moral laws ; but they differ from them in as much as that we are free to obey, or to disobey, a moral law, but we must invariably obey the laws of the spirit. Their transgression is not punished as that of the former ; it is excluded. I may express it in this form—man shall not kill, this is a moral law, but man must die, this is a law of the spirit immutable and eternal.”

*Walter*.—“Can you tell me some of these laws?”

*Conchita*.—“The principal laws of the spirit world are two,—viz., *eternal progress*, and *re-incarnation*, which, as you must perceive, is but the natural consequence of the first, it being impossible to progress to any great extent in the short course of one earth life ; an infinite succession of finite existences are necessary to effect this eternal progress.”

*Walter*.—“*Re-incarnation!* I have often thought of that. You must remember the vision I had at Aberfeldy ; and those letters of Lady C—— which interested you so much ; but I have always needed positive proof. I do not doubt the possibility of a second earthly life, but I need an unquestionable proof of this before I make up my mind to believe in it fully.”

*Conchita*.—“And what greater proof do you want than that which is afforded to you every day ? Is not re-incarnation the only possible



explanation of every phenomena of earthly existence? How else could you explain the facts you are now enquiring about, and that appear to you so incompatible with the wisdom and the love of a just and all-wise Creator; that some men are good, and others bad—some highly intelligent, and others brutal savages?

“Why do children, as you say, offer from their earliest youth such diverse and marked aptitudes? How is it that a Pascal is able to discover by himself thirty-two propositions of Euclid at the age of nine, and thus *invent* geometry; while hundreds of men are never able to get beyond the *Pons Asinorum*?

“How is it that certain children show from their very earliest youth those instincts of vices or of virtues; those sentiments of noble dignity, or of evil pride, which offer such a contrast to the sphere in which they have been born?

“Why, in one word, and making all abstraction of education, are some men so much more advanced than others?

“And above all, how else can you reconcile all these undoubted truths with the love, justice, wisdom, and power which at the same time you attribute to God?

“If you meditate on all these things, you will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that this life is but the sequel to a previous existence; but one link in an endless chain of eternal progress.

“What philosophy can otherwise explain these mysteries of creation? Either the souls at their birth are equal, or they are not. If they are equal, why these diverse aptitudes which no one can deny? Why that marked superiority of one over another? Surely you would not sacrifice the justice of the Almighty, in order to settle this difficulty, by saying that *he has made them so according to his own caprice?*

“If, on the contrary, you admit a succession of previous existences; whether upon this earth or upon another, all is satisfactorily explained. Each man comes into the world with the intuition of what he has previously acquired, he is more or less advanced according to the number of his previous existences. Just in the same way as if we compare several persons of various ages, each of them will have a development proportioned to the number of his years; for the number of lives are for the soul, as the number of years are for the body.

“If you were to assemble in a large hall a thousand persons from the age of one, to that of a hundred, and supposing you ignored this difference between their ages, would you not wonder how it happened that some were large and others small, some old and others young, some educated and others ignorant? But if you knew the secret that some had lived many years before the others, all would be explained to you, and you

would no longer be astonished at the great difference that would naturally exist between the baby and the man.

“The succession of existences at once explains all those differences. A Newton is a Newton because he has lived many times; and learnt so much, that he is at once able to take the first position in the planet upon which he is incarnated, independently of the age of his present organisation. A savage is a savage, because as yet he is uneducated, and inexperienced; but with time he too will reach the mountain of knowledge, and take his place by the side of the Newton. Thus you see that we are all brethren, that we have all been created equal, and that it is only after a long succession of existences that we are able to triumph over ignorance and evil.”

*Walter.* “Your theory seems indeed to explain many of the unaccountable facts which otherwise seem likely to remain for ever as mysteries to us. I could never bring myself to believe that God, with all his eternal justice, goodness, and Omnipotence, should have created some of his children superior to others—should have allotted happiness and health to a few, and misery and infirmities to all the rest. According to you, my Conchita, he created all men alike; and the great difference that we daily notice amongst them proceeds entirely from their own subsequent conduct. Those who have been good, are enjoying the reward of their good



deeds—those who have been perverse and wicked are suffering the consequences of their evil conduct. Have I understood your meaning?”

*Conchita.* “Yes, Walter.”

*Walter.* “But then, granting that God created all spirits equal, why did he not make them at once perfect, instead of subjecting them to this long series of proofs and transformations?”

*Conchita.* “If God had made the spirits from the very beginning perfect in every way, he would not only have made them according to his image; he would have made them equal to himself. The creature would then have been equal to the Creator, which of course would be impossible. We are created ignorant and simple—innocent, it is true—on account of our ignorance of all existing things; but far from being perfect, or even good; for, knowing not good from evil, how can we choose between them? Through a long series of existences then, incarnated at different times, and in different material bodies, more or less perfect according to the condition of our soul, we progress and advance gradually towards Him, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; we become in time good and wise; but without ever reaching that source of perfection which alone belongs to the Almighty; and which will always divide the creature from the Creator; for effect can never become cause.”



## V.

“ Toutes les fois qu'un fait nouveau et saisissant se produit au jour dans la science, les gens disent d'abord : 'Ce n'est pas vrai.' En suite : 'C'est contraire à la religion.' Et à la fin : 'Il y a long-temps que tout le monde le savait.' ”—AGASSIZ.

*Walter.* “ Do you think, my Conchita, that God, with all his justice and goodness, would force his children to undergo a second life of miseries and tribulations ? Would it not be more in accordance with the supreme ideas we have formed of him, to suppose that he will pardon and reward his children directly after their death, and then send them all to heaven, to enjoy in divine repose a whole eternity of happiness ? ”

*Conchita.* “ No, Walter, that would not be justice. If God were to pardon, and send the wicked to heaven, where would he send the just ? The wicked must be punished for their wickedness, and for their own good, in order that they may repent, and reform, and then enter Heaven. God, in his great mercy, might pardon their sins, but in his great justice he cannot. A punishment is therefore necessary, but a punishment proportioned to the transgressions of the criminal ; and as man cannot commit an eternal sin, an eternal punishment would be preposterously out of proportion

to his crimes, therefore would not be justice. Do you think that God would be more just in condemning a man to perpetual sufferings for a few moments of error, than in affording him the means of repairing his faults and doing penance for them ?

“ Just suppose that two farmers had each a servant, who in time might become heads of farms themselves. One day these two men go out for a holiday together, and get drunk, as ignorant men will do. One of the farmers dismisses his servant in consequence ; in spite of all his prayers and entreaties ; and the poor man, sent out of house and home, dies of misery and cold. The other farmer says to his man : ‘ You have lost a day by your bad behaviour, and you owe me a compensation. You have done your work badly ; I will not therefore give you your salary, but I will let you begin over again. Try to work hard, and not get drunk, and I will keep you still in my service, and you may yet aspire to set up for yourself in the course of time, if you behave properly.’ Which of the two farmers do you take to be the most merciful and the most just and humane ? ”

*Walter.* “ The one who gives his servant another chance, of course.”

*Conchita.* “ And do you think God would be less just and less merciful than the farmers of the earth ? No ; if we fail in one existence, he will let us have a second chance of success. He will not condemn us to eternal damnation because we

have failed once. You must remember that he is our Father as well as our God, and what father would like to see his children miserable, if he can make them happy for evermore ? ”

*Walter.* “ I quite agree with what you say, Conchita. You know that I never could bring myself to believe in the existence of an eternal hell : my heart refused a doctrine which is so contrary to all our ideas of justice and of mercy. I believe in eternal progress. One is obliged to believe in progress in these days, when all things seem to progress so visibly. And I also believe, that for this eternal progress one life is insufficient. God is too merciful to refuse us opportunities of repentance and amendment ; and will therefore give us another chance in a second existence ; but why should you suppose that this second life will take place upon the earth ? Are there not plenty of other worlds in God’s universe ? ”

*Conchita.* “ Because we must repair our faults where we have committed them. Besides, I know it to be the case. And why should we not come back to the same world as often as we can find something to learn and to study upon its surface ? Your hypothesis would be a true one, if all the inhabitants of each world were exactly at the same level, intellectually and morally. Spirits could then only progress by going from one world to another. But this is not the case. You have only to look around you to be convinced of this



fact. There are not two men alike ; whilst between the greater part there exists the greatest degrees of difference. Look at those African negroes, and at their white masters, just outside your window, and you will be convinced of this. Why should you send the savage to a distant world to find the degree above him, when he has got it by his very side upon the earth ? If this were not the case, why did God place the savage by the side of the civilized man ; the negro by the white, the ignorant by the learned ? Do you not see, Walter, that it is this very contact that will make men progress ? There is no more necessity therefore, for a spirit to change his world at every new incarnation, than there is for a student to change his college at every new class to which he advances.

“God has, in his great wisdom, peopled his worlds in such a way, that each one offers for the spirits who inhabit it, a wide field of improvement and education. Besides, as I have told you before, we must repair our faults in the place where we have committed them, and surrounded by the same spirits whom we have injured or offended, or how can we make them the restitution and the reparation we must make them ? what would become of all family ties, and of all earthly friendships, if, after death, each spirit were to go its own way into a distant world ?”

*Walter.* “Do you mean to say that families



still exist in the spirit world, and that friendships are more lasting than life ? ”

*Conchita.* “ True friendships are. As for family ties, they do not exist as ties outside the earth ; but you have seen with what joy and happiness I met my dear parents again. Sympathy and love are immortal as our souls are immortal ; for they are attributes of those souls, and therefore accompany them through all our many incarnations. I will explain this to you some other day. To-night, I want to convince you that each spirit should remain in the same world until he has acquired the total sum of knowledge and goodness to be derived from it ; and I should like you to be entirely convinced of this truth before I go on with my subsequent adventures.”

*Walter.* “ I certainly think your doctrine is a very reasonable and just one ; that we should be allowed to come back upon the earth to finish what we have begun, and begin what we have left undone ; to repair the evil we have caused, and to suffer the chastisement due for our crimes from the very spirits towards whom we have been unjust ; to become the servants of those whom we have oppressed as our slaves ; and beg our very bread at the door of the palace in which we have ruled supreme, if, in a previous existence, we have disdained the poor beggars who ate the crumbs of bread which fell from our tables.

All this seems very just indeed, and exceedingly plausible . . . . *but is it true ?* ”

*Conchita.* “Can you doubt my words ? What man at the end of his earthly career does not regret to have acquired too late an experience of which he can no longer profit ? This experience cannot be lost, *is not lost*, for he will profit by it in a new existence. Can you still doubt this law so essential to our progress and to our welfare ? Can you still entertain a doubt as to the reality of re-incarnation ? I wish you were a free spirit like myself, capable of traversing space with the rapidity of thought, that you might see your previous existences, one by one, as I have done, and no longer doubt the truth of this law.”

*Walter.* “Have you seen any of your previous existences, Conchita ? ”

*Conchita.* “Yes, I have seen them all over again, just in the same way that I saw my last one, and with equal clearness. For this, I had only to go to a star distant enough from the earth, that the luminous rays of this planet should only reach me at the end of many years, in order to see my past over again. From the Alpha of the Large Bear, a star which is millions and millions of miles distant from your planet, I have seen one of my former existences ; from Antares or the Alpha of the Scorpion, I have seen another, which took place many hundred

years before ; from Fomahant, I have seen still a more remote one, and thus, by going further and further from the earth, I have passed, in review, one after another, all my previous lives upon its surface. Can I possibly doubt of the reality of re-incarnation after this ? ”

*Walter.* “ You see, my dearest Conchita, we have not all been so highly favoured as you have ; we are not all able to travel with the velocity of thought as you do ; and from the distant stars follow the course of our various earthly existences. We have not even the dimmest recollection of any—at least, I for my part have not ; although I have heard people say, they sometimes had flashes of remembrance of some unknown past. How can you ask me, therefore, to believe in the reality of a past of which I have lost all recollection ? ”

*Conchita.* “ Because you cannot remember your previous existences, you will not believe you have had any ! Can you remember your life in your mother’s womb ? No : and yet you cannot deny that you were there. Can you remember your first months upon this world passed in the arms of a nurse ? No : and yet you do not doubt for a single moment that you were once a little babe in arms.

“ While incarnated upon the earth, we are obliged to use the material organs of our earthly body, through which alone we can receive sensa-



tions, and remember events ; but as our material brain is necessarily imperfect, it cannot remember more than a certain number of events, and those only of its own immediate experience. We thus find ourselves engaged in a new existence, for which we bring new organs, a material instrument newly formed, and a stranger to all antecedents ; of a limited and finite nature, incapable of receiving other impressions than those of the material objects which surround it, and ignorant of all things it cannot see or learn for itself. Such an organism cannot, therefore, appropriate to itself the concrete recollections of an existence which has not been its own ; it cannot, in one word, have the perception, or the memory of actions performed by its in-dwelling spirit in another centre, and with a different organisation. In MAN'S economy, spirit and body constitute one being ; the spirit then cannot divide this unity in order to remember, in its present existence, the acts and perceptions collected together during a previous incarnation ; it can only ponder and reflect upon the actions and perceptions of its present existence which will be the result of the quality it has acquired, and in accordance with the progress it has made in the past. We therefore, for a certain time at least, forget our previous experiences. The caterpillar cannot remember its rudimentary existence in the egg ; the chrysalis cannot remember its early days when it worked amongst



the grass of the field. The beautifully painted butterfly, which flits from flower to flower, sparkling in the rays of the sun, cannot remember the time when its grub slept suspended to the branch of a tree, nor the morning when its larva coiled itself round the small shrubs ; and yet the egg, the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the butterfly, are they not all one and the same being ? ”

*Walter.* “ And yet, my beautiful teacher, if we had already lived upon this world, would not something remain to us of those previous existences ? Otherwise, what can be the use of them if we lose all recollection of their having ever taken place ? ”

*Conchita.* “ All is arranged for the best, Walter. The more you know of the universe and the laws which govern it, the more you will admire the justice and foresight of the Creator. God in his wisdom could not permit that the recollections of a previous existence should disturb the economy of a second incarnation, or counteract the just measure of probation or expiation that he has thought necessary to impose upon the spirits who owe to him their existence ; they therefore, only bring away from this earth-life the general result derived from the lessons of its experience. Every trial we undergo leaves its trace indelibly engraved upon our souls ; by fortifying us in virtue, improving our minds, colouring our sentiments, and awakening our dormant

feelings. It is for us to improve each opportunity thus afforded us for advancement, by cultivating the better side of our nature, correcting our evil propensities as they arise, and confirming ourselves in goodness ; all that is required of us, is to do the best we can, to the utmost of our power. As each evil inclination is subdued, a virtuous resolution is implanted in our very being, which will in time bring forth good fruit ; at last perhaps the time will come when, as more perfect beings, the remembrance of the past will no longer hinder our progress in the present, and we shall then probably be permitted to remember even on the earth the *incidents* of our past experiences, and be able to profit by this knowledge. But at present these particulars would not help us ; on the contrary, if such a recollection could be reproduced in man, with his present imperfect organism, the confusion which would naturally result for him, caused by the recollection of so many incoherent events—particularly when his memory would begin to fail him—would end by causing in his mind a sort of mania, producing madness ; he would no longer care for the present, and would end by living completely upon the recollections of the past.

“Besides, if men in their present transitory and imperfect state knew that what they cannot accomplish in one existence they will be able to do in another, they would simply give themselves up to pleasure and enjoyment, saying, ‘In our

next life we will work, in this one we intend to enjoy ourselves.'

"And men are so ignorant at present of what is really good for them, that that '*next life*' would never come; and like the children who do not want to go to school, they would always find some pretext for a holiday, and say to-morrow we will work; to-morrow . . . and to-morrow, . . . but that to-morrow would never come. This is the reason why men, until now, have not been taught this great truth, for fear that it would only serve them as an excuse for deferring their tasks till a future existence. And even now *it can only be received by the few who are ready for it.*

"And yet, although we do not remember our previous lives, have we not all experienced at some time or other vague recollections, or confused intuitions, of a former existence?

"Have we not all felt sometimes, when we have seen a place for the first time, that we have been there before?

"And do we not also feel, sometimes, when we meet a person for the first time upon the earth, that we have been previously acquainted? If not, how is it that we take such sudden likes and dislikes to people, whom as yet we have neither cause to like nor to dislike. What is sympathy, but the vague remembrance of a previous friendship or acquaintance?

"And those fixed ideas we so often notice in



some persons, are they not also the confused recollections of a previous life ?

“ And as I have said, if it be true we forget that we have ever lived before, we do not forget what we learnt during our previous existences. How else can you explain the extraordinary facility with which some children learn certain things, which we are sure they have never even heard of before in this life ? How can you explain why a Paganini plays the violin from his earliest years, and a Pascal discovers geometry when scarcely nine years old ? Why is it, in one word, that some men know things without ever having learnt them ? It is simply that they still possess the remembrance of what they have learnt in a previous incarnation ; although they are not able to account for it. When men say that certain individuals have old heads on young shoulders, or that they are born artists, pianists, astronomers, linguists, they speak a great truth without knowing it.

“ In a new existence, some of our faculties may remain dormant, so to speak, because our spirit is required to exercise a new one, with which our already acquired faculties might interfere ; but after death we recover, and again come into the enjoyment of all our faculties, past as well as present ; for nothing is lost that may be of any use to progress, such is the economy of the universe.”



Alfred Tennyson, with the prophetic inspiration of the true poet, in his "Two Voices," alluding to this subject says:—

- " I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.
- " It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.
- " As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The stepping thro' from state to state.
- " As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.
- " So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.
- " But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race,  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;
- " Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning towards the lamps of night.
- " Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—
- " I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.
- " And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.
- " Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

- “ For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, should she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?
- “ Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—
- “ Of something felt, like something here,  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare.”

## VI.

“Veniet tempus, quo posterī nos, tam aperta ignorasse, mirabuntur.”—SENECA.

“It is a very ancient opinion that souls, when they leave this world, go to Hades, from whence they again return to this earth, coming back to life after having passed through death. . . . It seems to me, Cébès, that nothing can be opposed to this truth, and that we have not been mistaken when we adopted it; for it is certain, that there is a return to life; that the living are born of the dead; that the souls of the dead still live, and that those of the good are happier than those of the bad.”

SOCRATES, *in the Phædros.*

*Walter.* “Your theory, my beloved Conchita, is certainly very philosophical, and it reminds me of those speculations of Lessing on the education of the human race,\* which you know I so greatly

\* “Go thine inscrutable way, eternal Providence! only let me not despair of Thee because of this inscrutableness! Let me not despair of Thee, even if Thy steps sometimes appear to me to be going backwards! It is not true that the shortest line is always straight. Thou hast, on Thine eternal way, so much to carry on together; so much to do; so many side-steps to take! And what if it were as good as proved that the vast slow wheel, which is bringing mankind nearer and nearer to its future perfection, is only put in motion by smaller, swifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit to the sum of that greater movement? . . . And so it is! The very same way by which the human race is travelling on to its perfection, must every individual of that race,—one sooner, another later,—have travelled over. *Have travelled over in one and the same lifetime?* Can he have been,

admire ; but certainly it is not a new doctrine, and may be said to resemble in many points the metempsychosis of Plato."

*Conchita.* "The antiquity of this doctrine should rather prove to you its truth than form an objection. As to its truth, I may tell you, therefore, that it is as old as the world, and that you will find it to be the basis of all the ancient religions

in one and the self-same life, a sensual Jew and a spiritual Christian? Can he, in the self-same life, have overtaken both? . . . Surely not that! But why may not every individual man have existed more than once upon this earth? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? Because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had perverted and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? Why may not *I* have already performed those steps of my education which the prospect of merely temporal penalties and rewards can bring man to? And why may I not also have performed all those other steps which the prospect of eternal rewards has so powerfully assisted us to accomplish? And why should I not come back again, as often as I am able, to acquire fresh knowledge, fresh expertness, from the experiences of this world? Do I take away so much from one life here that there is nothing to repay me for the trouble of coming back? Is this a reason against it? Or, because I forget that I have been here already? *Happy is it for me that I do forget!* The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And even that which I forget *now*, is it necessarily forgotten for ever? Or is it a reason against this hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? (*But can that time be said to be 'lost' to me whose results have made me what I am.*) 'Lost!' 'Time lost!' And how much, then, should I miss? *Is not a whole eternity mine?*"—Gotthold Lessing. Translated by the Rev. Frederick William Robertson of Brighton.

[I consider this little essay of the eminent German philosopher so beautiful, and so well-reasoned, that I have myself translated it into Spanish ; in which language it has appeared in a magazine published in Madrid.]



and systems of philosophy. Pythagoras, as you must know, was not the author of the system of the metempsychosis ; he only adapted it from the Indian and Egyptian philosophers, who believed in it from the remotest period. But you also must have noticed that there exists a vast difference between the ancient metempsychosis and the modern doctrine of re-incarnation. The ancients taught that the soul of man could be re-incarnated in the body of an animal, which of course, is absurd, as where would then be the *progress* of the spirit ? I do not believe for one moment that Pythagoras or Plato themselves believed in this retrogradation, but that they thought themselves obliged to teach it, in order to create in their carnal-minded and ignorant disciples the fear that if they behaved badly they would be punished by having to live again in the body of an animal.

“ Every religion of antiquity had its Mysteries or Sacred teachings ; thus concealing their profoundest doctrines under a veil of initiation. The letter of the ancient Bibles, in the same way, was but a vestibule leading to the shrine itself ; which was thus veiled by veils which were intended to baffle the rude gaze of the ignorant and carnal-minded ; but still a vestibule, through which the enlightened soul might be led up to the inner sanctuary ; to the Hesperian gardens and golden fruit of the *Timæus* and the oracles. The principal of these

mysteries were the Hermetic, the Orphic, the Eleusinian, and the Kabbalistic. Now all these four taught the same great doctrines, upon which were based all their beliefs; but which were only made known to a few, and this after a long and painful ordeal of initiation. And the principal of these doctrines were:

*Firstly*, "The unity of the Supreme Being; and the fact that the pretended 'gods' of the temple were only representations of the Divine attributes; symbolised for the use of the unlearned, who were considered to be incapable of appreciating abstract ideas."

*Secondly*, "The plurality of inhabited worlds; and the true motion of the planets round the sun, as subsequently demonstrated by Copernicus and Galileo."

*Thirdly*, "The anteriority of the soul to the body; and its gradual education and purification through the trials and discipline of a succession of earthly lives in your globe, and in other planets, until freed from the need of any farther contact with planetary matter."\*

But the doctrine of a succession of lives was

\* See Dr Dollinger's treatise on the *Eleusinian Mysteries* and his *Judaism and Paganism*, vol. i., p. 164. Delormel, also, in his great work on *Ancient Mysteries* entertains the same opinion, when he says:—"From the earliest times the initiated have known the unity, infinity, and perfection of God, the infinity of inhabited worlds, and our successive lives in them;" and in arguing in support of this latter point he adds, "*As it is absurd to*

not taught alone by the sacred mysteries. Religions older and more perfect than those to which they appertained, also had this truth amongst their doctrines. For we find it equally in the Vedas, and in the Bhagavat-Gita of India, as in the Eddas of Scandinavia, and the Zend-Avesta of Persia. All the great masters of ancient religions taught it, and even the Jews believed in it.\*

*suppose that blessings and sorrows are the result of chance, we must believe them to be a consequence of our right doing or wrong doing in previous lives."*

The Mysteries also taught the fact of communication between souls in the flesh and souls in the spirit-world, and the grand doctrine of Orpheus in regard to the more advanced spirits, whom he called the "*rector gods*" or "*ruling gods*" of planets—the "*Viswadiva*" of the Rig Veda—the "*Amshaspundi*" of the Zend-Avesta—the "*Elohim*" of Genesis—and our own "*Christ*" of the New Testament. We shall see later on, that these names all conveyed the same meaning.

For more information on this subject consult the *Quatre Evangelis* of Roustaing, the *Testimony of the Ages* of A. Blackwell, and Simon, *Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, i., 446, 590.

\* "Their notion of the immortality of the soul was the Pythagorean metempsychosis; that the soul, after the dissolution of the body, winged its flight into another; and these removals were perpetuated and diversified through an infinite succession; the soul animating a sound and healthy body, or being confined in a deformed and diseased frame, according to its conduct in a prior state of existence. The author of the book of Wisdom (ch. viii., 20) seems to allude to the same doctrine when he tells us *that, being good, he came into a body undefiled*. It is evident that the disciples of our Lord had adopted this *philosophical doctrine of the transmigration of souls* from the Pharisees, whose tenets and traditions were very generally received, when, having met a man who was *born blind*, they asked him whether it were the sins of this man, in a pre-existent state, which had caused the Sovereign Disposer to inflict upon him this punishment. To this inquiry Christ



*Walter.* "How do you account for the existence of this doctrine amongst those of the earliest religions?"

*Conchita.* "Because it was revealed to them by God himself, for all religious teaching comes from him, and from him alone."

*Walter.* "But if all religious teachings come from God, how is it that they are so different? Surely the God who spoke to Buddha could not have been the same God who afterwards spoke through Christ? If one revelation was true, the other surely must be false, for they are wonder-

replied that neither his vices nor sins, in a pre-existent state, nor those of his parents, were the cause of his calamity (in *this* particular instance).—John ix., 1-4.

"From this notion, derived from the Greek philosophy, we find that during our Saviour's public ministry the Jews speculated frequently concerning him, and indulged in continual conjectures as to which of the ancient prophets it was whose soul now animated him, and performed such astonishing miracles. Some contended that it was the soul of Elias, others of Jeremiah, whilst others, less precise, only declared in general terms that it must be the soul of one of the old prophets by which these mighty deeds were now wrought in their midst (Matt. xvi., 14; Luke ix., 19)."—Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures*.

To this I may also add the passage in Mark vi. 14, "And king Herod heard of *him* (Jesus); (for his name was spread abroad :) and he said, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Others said, that it is Elias. And others that it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead." (See also Josephus' account of the Pharisees and their doctrines.—*Antiquities of the Jews*, B. xviii.)



fully unlike in almost every part, and often contradict each other."

*Conchita.* "And does not the New Testament also contradict the Old? and yet don't you believe them both to have been revealed by the same God?"

*Walter.* "This reminds me of Macaulay's conclusion, that 'revealed religion is not in the nature of a progressive science.'"

*Conchita.* "And why not? All religions have been revealed by God, and are therefore true; but as men are at different stand-points, their religious beliefs must also be of a progressive character. What is truth to you is not necessarily truth to an Indian. You forget those beautiful lines you used once to be so fond of:—

'All theories are thought forms—that the mind  
Creates from its own knowledge, or its guess.  
God never yet revealed himself in full,  
And never will. No intellectual form  
Is able to receive the Deity,  
Save as a crystal draws the solar light.  
This is my faith, that God reveals himself  
To every man according to his state;  
Higher to highest minds; so lessening down  
To the dim verge of reason. I believe  
That there are faculties in man, that are  
Mind-organs for the Infinite to fill.  
And that these may unfold without an end,  
And multiply without an end, and all,  
Inter-pervaded by one common life,  
Inform the soul for ever. This I know,  
Or, knowing not, believe in as in God;  
But still my thought is circumscribed; my faith

Being the sum of all my added thoughts,  
And these the measure of the active mind.' ”

*Walter.* “How well you remember those lines ! Yes, my Conchita, I quite agree with those opinions. I fully believe that even revelation must be progressive, and yet I cannot understand *how* this can possibly be.”

*Conchita.* “The masters of the ancient religions—Vishnou, Buddha, Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, Lao-Tze, Mencious, and likewise all the prophets of the Jewish nation—were in the spirit, or in a vision, when they saw all which they afterwards described. When they were in the spirit, or in vision, they were out of their material bodies—that is to say, that their spirit was free from all earthly ties, and able, therefore, to see such things as are only visible to the spirit. The eyes of their spirit were opened, and the eyes of their body shut ; and then they heard what the angels spoke, or what God spoke through the angels, and they likewise saw the things which were represented to them in heaven ; and then also they sometimes seemed to themselves to be carried from place to place, their bodies still remaining where they were. In this state was John when he wrote the Apocalypse ; Mahomet when he wrote the Koran ; and sometimes also Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, and Moses.\*

\* Consult on this subject Swedenborg's *Arcana Cœlestia* (1055-1925), *Apocalypse Revealed* (36), and Allan Kardec's *La Génèse, les miracles et les prédictions*.

“ While in this state of spiritual trance, truths were revealed to them which they were afterwards to teach to the people, but only such truths as they might understand and profit by. When they came back from their trance they prophesied and preached what they had seen; but being men, and therefore carnal and imperfect, they added what they thought proper, and in the same way left out truths which they were intended to reveal. For every prophecy has, according to the very definition of the word, a double source; it has, if you can understand it, two authors—the one human, the other divine. If uttered by the tongue of man, it must be coloured by his own mind—unless, indeed, he were but a mere instrument without any opinions of his own. The master or prophet expresses in words the truths conveyed to his mind while in the spirit—that is to say, during vision; but his mind cannot fully embrace them, for how can man fully comprehend the mind of God? Every man lives in time, and belongs to time; the present must be to him clearer than the future. But with God and the higher spirits there is no past nor future; as I told you last night; every truth is present to him in all its extent—even as our past is present to us free spirits in all its details—so that God’s expression of it, if you can understand me, differs essentially from that which can be comprehended by the mind, or uttered by the tongue of man.

“Prophets are but the instruments through whom, or rather by means of whom, God speaks to his children—that is to say, intelligent, and not mere mechanical instruments, but instruments all the same.”

*Walter.* “The notion of a double sense in the ancient religious teachings, has been entertained by many persons. Some—Swedenborg for instance—go further still, and attribute to it as many as three different senses. The Pagans also believed their oracles to possess two distinct meanings. But don’t you see, my Conchita, that this notion is highly inconsistent; because, according to it, God, who is all-wise and all-powerful, is unable to convey His meaning to the very men he selects to teach his people?”

*Conchita.* “On the contrary, it is the prophet who is unable to understand and appreciate the true meaning of God.”

*Walter.* “This is more contradictory than ever. The prophet is unable to comprehend God’s meaning, and yet he explains his doctrines to the people! God thus infuses the true meaning into the words which are uttered, although he cannot infuse it into the mind of the man who utters them!”

*Conchita.* “Does not this prove to you, Walter, that the prophets of old, and all the great religious teachers and reformers, were but *mediums*, through whom the higher spirits, the



rulers of the planet, taught men progressively the great truths of religion, one after another, as they were able to receive them ?

“ The spirits spoke through them ; but as they spoke with the tongues of men, their doctrines and prophecies participated naturally of the ideas of those men.”

*Walter.* “ If that were true, Conchita, we can see farther into the mind and meaning of God than those to whom he addressed those doctrines and prophecies. For we can comprehend their true sense, while they—even the prophets who meant to expound them—in expressing the ideas which he had put into their minds, mistook or imperfectly conceived those ideas ; but to us it is given to discover the truth which their words contained, but did not express, or which, if they did express, the very speaker was not able to understand them.”

*Conchita.* “ This is only natural, if you remember the darkness of the times in which they lived, and think for one moment what those men were, and how little they knew ; and what we are, and the knowledge we possess. Those men, after all, were but ignorant, and half-civilized : the most learned amongst them ignored the very first laws of Nature ! No wonder, then, that they should not have understood what we still find it so difficult to comprehend ; aided as we are by all the discoveries of modern science. Besides, it was not

intended that those men were to comprehend to their full extent all the truth of the doctrines they blindly received. The real meaning, indeed, as I have already told you, was not revealed to the public; but only to the few initiated, who alone were considered capable of appreciating the truths, which lay hidden behind the veil of mystery, and of external sacrifices and ceremonies; which baffled, so to speak, the common mind of the ignorant crowd. Thus you see, that though these views were handed down from generation to generation among the learned, their public promulgation was forbidden; lest they should lead the common people to throw off the yoke of the priests, to addict themselves to the practice of magic, or even, disgusted with the ills of earthly life, to commit suicide in the hope of finding themselves in a happier state of existence; as did the pupils of Hegesias at Cyrene, after listening to his eloquent discourse on immortality; when, impatient to enter on the enjoyment of the felicity he had described, they all killed themselves in a body." \*

\* Cicero and Plutarch exalt the teaching of the mysteries. Aristophanes and Sophocles also speak in their favour.

Pythagoras, Iamblichus, Socrates, Plato, Tinnæus of Locris, Archytas of Tarentum, Plotinus, Solon, Thales, Anaxagoras, Archimedes, Aristotle, Aristarchus of Samos, Philolaus, Hierocles, Hipparchus—all taught that the soul is anterior to its body, and that it animates a succession of material forms. In his "Treatise on the Egyptian Mysteries" (sec. vi., chap. iv.), Iamblichus says:—"The justice of God is not the justice of men. Man bases his

*Walter.* "But is it not absurd to suppose that God would have infused ideas into a man's mind for the sole purpose of being kept hidden as sacred doctrines of some Kabbala or Mysteries ; only to be revealed to a few initiated individuals, and not to be taught to the general public whom he knew would not then have understood them ? "

*Conchita.* "We have no reason to suppose that what was then revealed could not be understood by some more developed minds who were above the ignorant superstitions and fanaticism of the general public. In every age and in every nation, there have been spirits at all stages of development, and therefore as superior to the general minds of the people, as we are over the savages of Central Africa. Surely those must have understood the doctrines they taught, and lived for ! Moses, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, surely they at least must have comprehended, even as we now comprehend, the great truths which lay hidden in the wisdom of the Egyptians and the philosophy of the Greeks !

idea of justice on the relation of his present life ; God's justice is based on our successive existences, and the great *total* of our lives. Thus the troubles that afflict us are often the chastisement of sins of which the soul has been guilty in a preceding life. Sometimes God hides from us the reason of our earthly afflictions ; but we ought, none the less, to attribute them to his justice." (See A. Blackwell's "Testimony of the Ages," the excellent papers in *The Pathfinder* by Dr W. P. Perfitt and J. L. Gooding, and Michelet's "Bible de l'Humanité."

“We have no reason to suppose then, that what was revealed in those days could not be understood; perhaps it was not so in all its meaning; I mean its deeper meaning; but certainly it was understood, to a certain extent; otherwise it would not have been revealed.

“Beneath the obvious meaning of all the doctrines of antiquity, which were meant for all; lay a latent signification meant in some future day to connect *that revelation* with a *future one*. For example, some parts of the Brahminical revelation were not understood in their fulness until after the coming of Buddha; the ancient Vedas were only then explained and fulfilled. Some essential doctrines of the Mosaic revelation were not understood either, until the coming of Christ; who in the same way fulfilled the predictions of the Jewish prophets.

“Thus you must bear in mind that revelation is not only meant for a race, for a nation, for a generation; but for a great many races—nations, and generations; who must naturally be at very different stand-points of progression.”



## VII.

“ O temps, suspends ton vol ! heures propices,  
Suspendez votre cours !  
Laissez-moi savourer les rapides délices  
Des plus beaux jours !  
Mais je demande en vain quelques moments encore,  
Le temps m'échappe et fuit ;  
Je dis à cette nuit ; sois plus lente ; et l'aurore  
Va dissiper la nuit.”

*Walter.* “ Then you think that the doctrine of the transmigration which, as we know, was taught by all the ancient religions could not be fully understood in all its bearings until now ? ”

*Conchita.*—“ Yes, and the mistaken notion that human souls can enter the body of animals, which sprang out of this misunderstood truth, tells us plainly enough that the ancients did not, and could not, understand all the truth which lay hidden in ancient revelation ; although revealed to them by God himself.

“ The fact that life is a stream that flows through endless transformations, led them to suppose that a life of exceeding folly and wickedness may condemn one to be born for myriads of years, in the shape of abhorred and grovelling animals (who sometimes symbolise that sin) ; but this doctrine, absurd and unphilosophical as it is,

I have no doubt did a great deal of good, for it created in the carnal-minded and ignorant people such a mortal dread of becoming an animal in a future existence, that this mere fear, certainly saved them from many crimes and wickednesses which otherwise they would undoubtedly have committed.\*

\* "Life was a stream that flowed through endless transformations; and it was the delight of this mystical fancy to trace the protean play from shape to shape, through all the changes of natural birth and death in man, in the lower animals, in the vegetable, and even in the mineral world; and to associate them by ideal identities, as earnestly as modern science traces the atom through all the transmigrations of its history.

"The belief that each human soul passes through a succession of lives, in different bodily forms, visible or invisible—human, animal, vegetable, or even cosmical, from the plant to the star,—has perhaps been accepted, in some form, by disciples of every great religion in the world. It is common to Greek philosophers, Egyptian priests, Jewish Rabbins, and several early Christian sects. It appears in the speculations of the Kabbalists, of the Neo-Platonists of later European mysteries, and even of socialists like Fourier, who elaborates a fanciful system of successive lives mutually connected by numerical relations. It reaches from the Eleusinian Mysteries down to the religions of many rude tribes of North America and the Pacific isles. Not a few noble dreams of the cultivated imagination are subtly associated with it, as in Plato, Giordano Bruno, Helder, Sir Thomas Browne (also Voltaire, Sir Humphrey Davy, Goethe, Benjamin Franklin, Ponson du Terrail, Charles Bonnet, Dupont de Nemours, Jean Reynaud, Bouchet de Perthes, Pezzani, Pelletan, Cavour, Massimo d'Azeglio, George Sand, Méry, Lavater, Flammarion, Gautier, Victor Hugo, Louis Figuier, &c.), and are especially notable in Lessing's conception of a gradual improvement of the human type through metamorphosis in a series of future lives. Its prominence in the faith of the Hindus affords ample material for studying its natural grounds

“ But after all, is not even this horrible notion, in spite of all its faults and impossibilities, more

and conditions, as well as its significance for the universal experience.

“ Metempsychosis, as an idea and a faith, has been substantially the effort to express certain imperishable intuitions and organic relations.

“ At the root of it lay first the sense of immortality; the idea of life as not only transcending death, but as multiplying itself through successive forms of transient being, as if to emphasise and affirm its own necessity again and again; an entity which no bonds of material investment could hold fast, and no dissolution destroy, however low it might descend in the scale of nature. The sense of immortality is indeed always in some sort a sense of *inherent existence*, and looks backwards as well as forward; behind birth as well as beyond death; infers *pre-existence* as well as *post-existence*. It shrinks as much from an absolute beginning of our being as from an end of it; and so either leaves the soul it is tracing backward, in an impenetrable mystery, content with noting its emergence thence, at the moment of what we call birth, ‘trailing clouds of glory from God, who is our home,’—or else follows its earlier adventures with the eye of faith, through previous forms of being, forgotten or dimly recollected. And so the contemplative imagination of the Hindus loved to brood over these possible forms of successive births *in both directions*, from the island of this present life through boundless oceans of the past and future. It was at least a serene and immovable presumption of immortality that made this dream-voyage through the spheres of existence attractive and even possible.

“ Then there was the profound faith in immutable laws of moral sequence. ‘Action,’ says Manu, ‘verbal, corporeal, mental, bears good or evil fruit, according to its kind; from men’s deeds proceed their transmigrations.’ (Manu, xii. 3.) In the philosophical language of the Hindu schools, the ‘bonds of action’ are but another name for the endless consequences of conduct. It was natural to explain in this way those present moral as well as physical inequalities among men, their differing characters and destinies, which could not be accounted for by the data at hand. The sense of justice demanded that there should be found adequate



sublime, because more just and merciful, than the doctrine taught by most of the Christian fathers ?

grounds for these differences, in antecedent good or bad conduct ; which, of course, could only have made their marks in earlier states of existence. Such speculations have been common in the Christian world also, as solutions to justify not merely these actual differences in human destiny, but even those imaginary ones of theological invention, for whose infiniteness there seemed no rational ground in men's actual doings in this world. From Origen down to Edward Beecher the solution of this ' conflict of ages ' has been sought in *pre-existence*, which one or another theory of human nature and destiny has made a necessary hypothesis, upon these constantly recognised principles of moral continuity and sequence.

" We cannot wonder that the ancients satisfied their instincts of justice by similar explanations of the mysteries of good and evil, both physical and moral.

" It is the force of this ethical demand that every gift or defect shall find its ground in positive desert, shall point to some way *in which it was earned*,—that so frequently causes great personal virtues or power to impress the imagination as spiritual resources that only *pre-existence* can explain ; as heaped-up harvests of former lives, spent in noble disciplines and toil ; while excessive forms of vice seem to require similar accumulations of evil tendency through lives of correspondent tone.

" Hereditary transmission is indeed the only answer of science to these problems ; and this, in fact, is transmigration of qualities and destinies, if not of souls ; but it does not satisfy that demand of the moral nature, which *pre-existence*, as we have seen, was better suited to meet ; and so the solution of the inequalities in question goes over with us more wisely, among the possibilities of the life to come. Our oracle is not memory but growth. . . .

" The idea that evil is always the sign and punishment of past sin was not, however, peculiar to the Hindus, nor to the belief in transmigration. It was held by the Hebrews also ; and the protest of the natural heart and mind against it is the central idea of the sublime drama of Job."—*Samuel Johnson's Oriental Religions—India—Part the Second*.

See also on this interesting subject—" Ueber gelehrte Tradition im Alterthume, besonders in Indien," &c., read at the meeting of



The law of Manu distinctly affirms the "restoration of the wicked,"\* and Tâjnavalkya also describes the return of the vicious through these purgations to their original better status, and to new opportunities of amendment.†

"At worst, the Inferno of transmigration, with all its extraordinary incarnations and sufferings of all kinds, had not so relentless a spirit towards the offender as is involved in the developed Christian dogma of endless punishment.

"Would you not much rather be incarnated *for years* in the body of a lower animal than suffer *for ever* the inconceivable torments of your Christian hell? At least there is a certain hope still left to you, in the doctrine of the metempsychosis, mistaken as it is; while in the hell of the Chris-

Orientalists at Heidelberg by Professor Roth, and published in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, Leipzig, 1867, vol. xxi.—"On the Interpretation of the Veda," J. Muir, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*.—"On the Veda of the Hindus and the Veda of the German School," Th. Goldstücker.—"The Hymns of the Gaupāyanas, and the Legend of King Asamāti," by Professor Max Müller.—"The Rig-Veda-Sanhita, the Sacred Hymns of the Brahmans," translated by F. Max Müller.—"The Zendavesta," by Westergaard.—"Eastern Life," by H. Martineau.—"La Bible de l'Humanité," of Michelet.—Williams's "Translation of Sakuatalā."—Garbha Upanishad, in Weber's *Indische Stud.*—"The Laws of Manu."—"Oriental and Linguistic Studies," by William Dwight Whitney.—Wheeler's "History of India."—And also the valuable article by Professor Roth in the *Zeitsch. d. Deutsch. Morg. Gesellschaft*, viii. 467, *seq.*; and another by Max Müller in the following volume of the same series for 1855.

\* Manu, xii. 22. See Elphinstone, quoted in Allen's *India*, p. 430.

† Tâjnavalkya, iii., 217, 218.

tian Church there is none ; for does it not teach us that '*as the tree falls so it will lie.*' But, thank God, neither of these cruel and impossible doctrines are true !”

Walter. “ I never could believe, as you know, my Conchita, in the existence of a hell, and I think with you, that even the doctrine of the metempsychosis is preferable to that Christian heaven in which the Deity is said to be glorified by the joy of the saints over the eternal miseries of the wicked in the flames of hell.

“ I remember St Thomas’s celebrated words, '*The blessed, without quitting the place they occupy in heaven, will nevertheless witness, in a certain way, probably by virtue of their great intelligence and clear vision, the torments of the damned ; and when they see them, they will not only not feel sorrow, but, on the contrary, they will be overcome with joy ; and they will praise God for their own happiness in witnessing the dreadful anguish of the wicked.*'

“ Could anything be more horrible, more improbable ? How can a religion which pretends to be one of love and justice teach such monstrous, such refined unutterable cruelty and selfishness ?

“ Oh, good and just God ! let me preserve my power of pitying and consoling my unfortunate brethren ; for such charity is the best part of my being, or shut for ever the doors of thy cruel heaven against me !”

*Conchita.* "I am glad to find—oh, my husband!—that such are your opinions. But do not so calumniate God, nor attribute to him such unjust and unmerciful proceedings as are implied by the doctrines of the metempsychosis, or of the eternal damnation of the wicked; but rather think of him as of a Father, loving, merciful, and kind; and, above all, just and forgiving, who will enable the sinner to repent, and amend his ways, *until seventy times seven.*"

"I have conveyed to you in as few words as I could the antiquity of the doctrine of re-incarnation; you see that all religions, up to Christianity itself, have been more or less based upon this idea. The theory of the eternal transmigration of souls is not therefore a foolish notion, but one which has been taught and believed in by the most eminent men of all ages. You may believe it to have been at first revealed from heaven to man, or not, just as you like; but an idea cannot traverse so many ages, and be accepted by so many philosophers and prophets, if it had no truth in its foundation. The antiquity of this doctrine is therefore a proof in its favour rather than an objection.

"But I have a proof stronger still, and one which cannot be refuted. I have seen several of my previous lives!—can I doubt, after this, the reality of the re-incarnation?"

*Walter.* "You have seen several of your previous lives! How, pray?"



*Conchita.* "Through the same means by which I saw my last. By going far away from the earth, in order that the luminous rays of this planet, reaching me after hundreds of years of perpetual progress, are able to reveal to me what was going on upon its surface at that time. For, as I have already told you, our past is eternally travelling through space with a velocity of 192,000 miles per second (which is that of light), so that we have only to go far enough from the earth in order to see it all over again.

"Some things also I can remember, for some things there are which one can never forget: and I can always refresh my memory by seeing over again the particular scene I would like to preserve before me."

*Walter.* "I wish you would relate to me some of your previous lives. Was I ever connected with you in the past? Did I also live by your side in those remote existences I have so completely forgotten?"

*Conchita.* "I will tell you all you will like to learn. You know, my beloved Walter, that my greatest happiness is to be by your side, but tonight our long conversation must end. I can see the first rays of the rising sun as they gild the towers of the Havana, and even the glorious stars of the Southern Cross are beginning to fade before the light of the coming day."

*Walter.* "Must you go? Again another long,



long day to wait, before I can once more see you, my darling! Oh, cruel, cruel day, which robs me of my happiness!"

*Conchita.* "Is it not enough that you have me with you during the night? Think to how many such comfort is denied. But I suppose the more men have, the more they desire. You can never be contented in this little world of yours, which is so dear to me still, in spite of all its miseries and imperfections.

"To-morrow, when the silver rays of the moon shall once more be reflected upon the phosphorescent waters of the bay before us, I will again be with you. I will then tell you of my past—how, from being the most wicked of sinners, I have become an angel of the spheres; how, out of the most violent of hatreds has gradually grown up the most unselfish love! And how we have progressed, by slow but marked degrees, from a half savage state, to our present station, passing from darkness into light, and making our way slowly but surely *through the ages!*"



## NIGHT THE THIRD.



“Transitory things are perishable; in this world there is no permanence.”—SAKYA MUNI.





## NIGHT THE THIRD.

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### I.

“In the first watch of the night the Lord (Buddha) entered into that state of meditation which gave him the power of remembering his former existences to a number beyond count. He remembered the time, and place, and nature of each existence ; his form, his colour, his good and evil fortune, and the condition to which he transmigrated on death. All this the Lord saw clearly as if it had been a world illumined by a thousand suns of exceeding brightness, and he saw that each condition was an effect of that which preceded it, and the cause of that which followed it.”—ALABASTER'S *Life of Buddha from the Siamese*.

*Conchita*. “The earth you inhabit is, as you know, but a small material planet which revolves round one of the smallest stars of the mighty Milky Way.

All the millions of bright stars which sparkle in the blue firmament over your head are suns, round which revolve systems of worlds similar to yours. Immeasurable distances separate those solar systems from one another, distances for which the human intellect has invented no numbers. Thought may conceive, but cannot express the vast amount of these systems which exist in the universe, any more than it can calculate the distances which separate them from yours.

If you were transported for years, ages, myriads of ages, through the far off realms of this endless ocean, space, and yet more space, worlds, and yet more worlds, for ever and for ever, would meet your bewildered sight ; if you were able to travel—I will not say with the velocity of an express train, which is at most, only that of sixty miles an hour—but with that of light which is of 12,000,000 miles a minute, and if you could travel for years at this almost inconceivable pace, heaven would succeed to heaven before you, sphere to sphere, one immensity to another immensity, and then—after having travelled without ceasing during endless ages, with this astounding rapidity which almost beggars the lightning's flash—were your flight to be eternal, passing the limits of human imagination to conceive, even then, the infinity of space would still remain unexplored before you, undiminished by the incalculable distances you would have already travelled in the eternity of your flight's duration ; for the infinitude of space would succeed to the infinity of time, without any limitation ; and then your soul, overcome with immensity, finding itself only on the threshold of infinite creation, would sink down, overpowered, before having yet taken a single step in space !

Such is the immensity of space ! such the numbers of worlds which constitute it ! Only He who has created them, and who holds them each

in its appointed place, can measure their distances, or count their myriad lights. And yet, this immense extension of space (which, even if you travelled with the rapidity of light at the rate of 12,000,000 miles every minute, you could not traverse in an eternity of continued journeyings), does not exist for me, and I can transport myself in a single moment, from one bright constellation to another with the rapidity of thought; for my spirit is free from the bonds of any earthly laws, and like thought, can wing its flight in less than a second to any part of the universe it desires to explore. Space does not exist for me. Neither does time exist for my freed spirit; I am independent of all material things, and the laws which rule matter are quite foreign to my sphere.

You must not therefore be surprised if I tell you that I can transport myself with the rapidity of thought to any of those distant stars which sparkle like islands of light on the dark atmospheric sea above your head.

Shortly after my death on earth,—I could not tell you whether it was day or night, for in the new life to which I was then born, the sequences of time are as unknown as those of space, and do not really exist,—I felt myself borne upwards towards the glorious stars which shine in your southern hemisphere.

I travelled, as I have told you, with the rapidity of thought, which no earthly numbers



can express. I passed close by those bright suns which are the delight of the astronomers of earth. I saw the constellation, in which shines Procion in all its greatness, Taurus, with its mighty Aldebaran for an eye, and glorious Sirius, the most beautiful of all stars. But I was borne further still, until I entered the constellation of Orion, which men so gaze at and admire during the long and beautiful nights of their earthly winter.

Orion is perhaps, indeed, the most admired of all constellations. If you direct your eyes on a winter's night towards the south of the Zodiac, a little below the 'Bull'—(Taurus), and the inseparable 'Brothers'—(Gemini), you will at once notice this giant, who raises in his powerful hand a mace directed towards the forehead of the wild 'Bull' above him.

Seven beautiful stars will first strike you as you gaze upon him. Two of these are of the first magnitude; the other five are of the second, and mark the shoulders and the right knee, and form the belt around his waist. Under the line traced by these stars a luminous ray of smaller ones very close together form the sword. Between the one which marks his other shoulder and the neighbouring constellation of the 'Bull,' you will see a number of little stars, which together form a curved line; these are the shield which he raises against the horns of the wild animal whose powerful eye



(Aldebaran) shines just above it, amidst the thousand lights of the nebula of the 'Crab.' The head of the giant is formed by rather an insignificant star of the fourth magnitude, which is scarcely visible to the naked eye; and the other two are the raised arm in which he holds the mace or club.

But the most beautiful of all the stars of this constellation is  $\beta$ , which forms the left foot of the giant, and which is sometimes called *Rigel*.

This enormous sun is the sixth star of that part of the heavens visible from this earth, and is undoubtedly infinitely larger than your sun.

Near it there is a little star, half-forgotten by the astronomers of earth, which forms the end of the sword, not far from *Betelgense*, and from that beautiful little nebula which so resembles the head of a whale. This little star is so distant from your earth, that light, which as you know travels 12,000,000 miles a minute, takes about 2470 years to traverse the space which divides them.

And yet, in spite of this enormous distance, I reached it with the velocity of thought! Such is the power of locomotion of our freed souls! I could not tell you what attracted me first towards that little star, but I no sooner directed my eyes towards it than I seemed to find myself upon its surface.

From it, as you may imagine, the earth is invisible, lost in the golden rays of the sun; but

our spiritual power of vision is unlimited, so that from that little star I could distinctly see all that was going on upon the earth, not at that moment, but 2470 years before—for, as I have already told you, the luminous rays of your planet take all that time to reach the small stars of the constellation of Orion, from which I was now observing it.

From this little star I saw one of my former existences which took place just 2470 years ago, for I was precisely in time to catch the luminous rays which carried its photograph into eternal space as they passed me.

I had had many lives before that one, which I have subsequently seen over again, and which, now that I am free from all material limitations, I can well remember when I care to do so ; but I shall begin with this particular life, because it was the one in which I first met you ; and because from it I may date the gradual progress of our souls which have been brought so much together in all subsequent existences. I will therefore begin to tell you what we did, and what we were in the year 600 before the coming of our Lord. Perhaps you will be able vaguely to recall some of the incidents as I relate them to you, but I doubt it, for your material organs are not adapted to exercise such a prodigious power of recollection. You must not be shocked, my dearest husband, if some of the incidents of that remote existence are opposed to your present standard of

good and evil ; for you must remember that in those days we were but young in the scale of beings, mere children of the human race, and that our spirits were both ignorant and undeveloped.

## II.

“Between the porphyry pillars, that uphold  
The rich moresque-work of the roof of gold,  
Aloft the harem’s curtained galleries rise,  
Where, through the silken network, glancing eyes,  
From time to time, like sudden gleams that glow  
Through autumn clouds, shine o’er the pomp below.  
What impious tongue, ye blushing saints, would dare  
To hint that aught but Heaven hath placed you there.”

T. MOORE.

IN the year 645 B.C., I was born in the little kingdom of Dewadaha, in Central India, not far from the holy city of Benares, which reflects its many towers upon the sacred waters of the Ganges.

The Nepaul mountains, that southern chain of the lofty Himalayas, divide this little kingdom from that of Kapila, the rajah, or petty king of which, was kindred to our sovereign, King Ankana, of celebrated memory.

Within this chain of natural outworks, with many a lofty spire and minaret glowing under the burning sun of India, lay the little city of Dewadaha, like some eastern houri, enveloped in rude yet magnificent attire, but whose dazzling charms and attractions—truly Asiatic—rivet the eye and fill the soul of the weary traveller as he approaches



from the mountains. The suburbs first struck the beholder, with their many Brahminical convents and temples, surrounded by umbrageous courts and galleries, a sylvan scene, of garden, grove, and forest, wildly intermingled with stone columns, and marble statues. The cistus, the aloe, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the mango-tree, the vine, and the bamboo, rose all around towards the pure blue sky. The airy minarets of the temples, competing in grace and elegance with the glorious palm, that sylph of vegetation.

Once inside the little town, the uneven streets and the rude and primitive style of architecture were very apparent; the miserable huts which served as dwelling-houses were closely piled up, one beside the other; but fretted domes, and sacred temples, whose roofs shone with rich golden arabesques under the rays of the mid-day sun, rose in every direction.

About the centre of the town was the palace, a large structure, composed of numerous buildings united by courts and terraces. Immense gardens adjoined it on the western side, which only ended in the walls of the town, where their many trees gave place to the fertile fields outside those walls. Situated in these gardens was the harem, that part of the palace inhabited by the women, and upon which all the riches and arts of the Hindus are lavished.

In this sumptuous residence I was born some 2500 years ago.

My mother was a Persian, one of the slaves of Queen Sunantha. As for my father, I never could learn his name. Some hinted the king himself; and so I loved to imagine in my wild dreams of ambition; but I could not be certain, for whatever might once have been the feelings of Ankana towards my mother, the sad truth was, that at the time of my birth, and ever afterwards, he disclaimed all connection with the Persian slave.

I was brought up in the harem, with the children of the king, according to eastern custom, and from my earliest youth I was made the slave of the Princess Maïa, his eldest daughter.

I cannot tell you how I hated this beautiful princess. Her great beauty caused me daily vexation; and even her constant kindness and consideration towards me, irritated me, and made my hatred towards her all the more violent.

I have suffered so much for this unworthy passion, Walter, that now I no longer blush to avow it. It all seems a dream, now that I have so completely out-grown that imperfect and rudimentary existence; and I feel pretty much like the man who, in his mature age, remembers the peccadillos he committed at school with almost a feeling of indifference, although they caused him so many bitter tears at the time.

I hated the princess and all the other women of the harem, they were all so much more beautiful and accomplished than I was! And yet they treated me like their equal. I took part in all their amusements, and my fare was in no way inferior to that of the king's daughters; but I could not forget that I was but their slave, born to serve and flatter them, and that my place was at their feet rather than by their side.

I was wicked and ignorant in those days, and yet I lacked not a certain sense of what was good and virtuous. I was cunning and artful, and from my earliest youth I learned to dissimulate, and to hide my true feelings. I kept my intense hatred to myself, and only showed a smiling face to the amiable princess, who was so innocently the cause of all my jealousy. In this way I managed to get into her favour, for she, like all the rest, believed me to be good and true. So little were the ways of the world known in the little palace of Dewadaha!

The two sisters, Maïa and Pachapati, were as different in outward appearance as in character. Maïa, the eldest, was fair and sweet to behold, and her face portrayed her mind, which was lofty and virtuous; she was the favourite of the king, her father, whom she loved with all the strength of her true and loving heart. Pachapati was also very handsome, taller than her sister, and of a darker complexion; she was the wiser of the

two, and the inseparable companion of her mother, the first wife of Ankana, and consequently the reigning queen.

One beautiful afternoon in spring, I was walking with the princesses through the shady avenues of those splendid gardens. I was but a girl, scarcely yet fourteen, but as the slave of Maïa I was allowed to follow her in all her rambles through the immense gardens adjoining the harem. I was but a mere girl, as I have told you, and yet nearly all the worst passions of a grown-up woman were already developed in my bosom, and in spite of my early age I was a consummate hypocrite, and could hide my bitter feelings in the depths of my heart, and cover them with winning smiles.

We were walking through the stately avenue, and, as girls have done since the beginning of the world, we were discussing our future prospects. Maïa, who was three years older than I, and therefore the eldest of the three, was telling her sister the incidents of her recent interview with the eight Brahmins sent by Singhanu, the neighbouring king of Kapila, to ask her hand for his son, the prince Suddhodana.

“I was walking in the garden, my sister,” she said, “when suddenly the branches of the trees before me opened, as if impelled by some unseen Yakhas, and the venerable messengers of the king of Kapila stood before me.”



“You must have been surprised, Maïa,” interposed the Princess Pachapati.

“That I was, my sister, and at first I took them to be messengers from heaven rather than Brahmins. They said that they had been sent forth by the king of Kapila, their lord, to seek a princess having the sixty-four signs of perfection, who would become the wife of their prince. They added that they had indeed found some few endowed with eighteen signs, but none with sixty-four.

“Their king, they told me, had some time ago a marvellous dream. Singhanu was calmly sleeping on his royal couch, when a palace covered with jewels sprung up before him ; its base rested on the world of men, its roof reached to the Brahma heavens, and it embraced all the ten thousand worlds within its gorgeous walls. Its first story was in the lowest angelic world, its second in the next higher angelic world ; in each of the six Dewa heavens was one story, and its stories extended throughout the sixteen heavens of the great Brahmas, and the heavens of the formless. Its dazzling radiance shone throughout all worlds, and in its midst there was a jewelled throne, two hundred and fifty miles in height and fifty miles in width ; and on it sat a mighty lion-like man, beside a beautiful lady. Then there arose a great cloud, and rain fell in gentle showers over the whole world. Then all created beings

fell before the feet of the mighty man, and he made them learn the rules of virtue, and bestowed exceeding happiness upon them. And on the east of the palace there was a vast lake, so wide that none could see the other side; and the mighty man made a ship, so that all who desired might be able to cross it.\*

“The next morning the king called us in to interpret this curious dream. We consulted together and discovered that it meant that his messengers would be successful; that we should find a princess possessing the necessary sixty-four signs of perfection, who would marry his son, and that her child would be a Buddha.

“Then the eight men fell on their knees before me, and said, ‘Thou, oh Maïa, art the chosen bride; thou wilt be the mother of a great Buddha, if thou wilt marry Prince Suddhodana.’”

“And what did you answer, my princess?” I asked her.

“What could I answer, Ananda? I told them that this was no matter for my ears. I bade them tell my father, and ask his consent. What more could I say?”

“Ah! yours is a glorious fate, Maïa. You will be a queen, even as our mother; and Prince Suddhodana is a handsome youth of your own age,—how happy you will be.”

“And I shall be the mother of a Buddha, like

\* This dream is taken from H. Alabaster's *Life of Buddha*.

Wipassi. Only think of that ! ” As she pronounced those last words her face beamed with delight, and the beautiful princess fell on her knees, and lifting her bright blue eyes towards the sky above, she cried, “ O Lord Brahm, who excellest in the three worlds, God of angels and men, let me be the mother of a Buddha, like thy messenger Wipassi ! ”

She looked so beautiful in that position, and her words were so full of faith, that it made my heart quite sore to behold her ; and I exclaimed to myself, “ No, thou shalt not, hateful Maïa. No, thou shalt neither be queen of Kapila, nor the mother of a Buddha, as I live ! For my whole life shall be spent in baffling thee, and in rendering thy existence unhappy. We shall see who will be the most powerful. The daughter of the powerful king, or the despised slave girl ! ”

### III.

“El hombre propone, Dios dispone.”—*Spanish Proverb.*

BUT what could I do ? I was, as I had said, but a poor slave girl, a little viper too feeble as yet to bite the generous hand which nursed it.

The ambassador from Kapila made a formal proposal for the Princess, from Prince Suddhodana, which was accepted by the king, her father.

Shortly afterwards the marriage took place, for which great preparations were made, and which was solemnised in the great temple.

It was arranged that the whole of Maïa's household should accompany her to her new capital to form there an harem worthy of the wife of so mighty a prince. Her sister the Princess Pachapati and forty other ladies, besides her numerous slaves, accompanied her therefore to Kapila, where a beautiful palace had been prepared for her by the Sakya princes. Since that day my home was in the city of Kapila, and in the harem of its queen.

My jealousy and hatred, as you may imagine, was not diminished by this success of my rival. Her marriage with the prince of Kapila only served to increase my anger and thirst for vengeance.



I saw her now the mistress of a splendid harem, the wife of a great prince, beloved by all, and held even by the Brahmins as a model of all virtuous and praiseworthy acts, whilst I was still a slave girl unnoticed, and despised. But my hatred made me feel superior to all around me. I longed for power, and for revenge, and whilst before Maïa I bowed smiling at her feet, behind her back I used all my arts and machinations to degrade her in the eyes of the prince, her husband, who, as I soon observed, was not quite unconscious of the few charms I then possessed.

And now, my beloved Walter, you first began to form part of my spirit's history, for the connection of our two uneducated and undeveloped spirits commenced at this period; my spirit's history is therefore henceforward that of your own. This fact has come to my knowledge since I last left you, endearing you to me more than you can possibly imagine, for you only remember the Conchita you have lately lost, whilst I can see you ever by my side, destined to become a part of myself, as you most truly have done through the long succession of trials and events that have connected us by our successive earth-lives through the ages, during which we have ever been side by side, first as enemies, gradually as friends, afterwards as lovers, latterly by the sacred bond of holy union, that bond which unites us as one

complete spirit for evermore. But at the time of the history I am now relating, and which I saw so distinctly from the little star in the constellation of Orion, our spirits had not yet been drawn together; there were many antagonistic elements in their individual characteristics, and I must first introduce you in my spirit's history as an enemy rather than as a friend.

You were then, one of the servants of the King of Kapila, by name Channa; you will therefore know that when I speak of him, it is the history of your own spirit that I am relating.

I first saw you in the harem of Maïa, where you used to come sometimes with your master, Prince Suddhodana, of whom you were the constant attendant. Indeed, you and the prince were the only men who had free admittance into the women's quarters of the palace.

From the first moment I saw this Channa, an idea suggested itself to my mind, and soon took entire possession of my imagination, becoming my constant dream. Yes, I would induce this youth to speak to the prince on my behalf. I would win him to my side, and make him the tool by whose means I could arrive to Suddhodana's favour, and in time supplant my beautiful rival.

For did I not belong to his harem, and consequently was I not also his wife in a certain way? It is true that I did not belong to the

royal caste, as my mistress, nor could I boast like her of sixty-four signs of perfection, but love knows no obstacles, and the heir of Kapila's throne was all-powerful. If I could once obtain his favour, I then thought, it will not be my fault if I do not share his golden throne.

You must not imagine, my Walter, for one moment, that I entertained any feeling of love towards this prince. In those days my spirit was yet too rude and undeveloped to nourish any such tender passion.

It was revenge and ambition alone that prompted me, and I was too ignorant to know that my hatred was wicked, and that all my passions that I then thought so grand, were those of sin.

One night you had come to the harem with the prince, who was in Maïa's apartments. I was on duty that night; it was late, and all the other women had retired to their couches, so that I found myself alone with you in the long gallery adjoining the princess's rooms.

"Channa must surely feel tired and weary," I said, as I stepped out into the paradise outside the gallery, "the night is close, and I think a walk in the open air might perhaps revive the faithful servant while he waits for his master."

"There's nothing I should so enjoy, my beautiful Ananda; but I fear the prince will be coming out, and surely he would miss his trusted slave."

“Oh, no fear of that; Suddhodana is sure to remain yet several hours by the side of the princess.”

This assertion soon convinced Channa, for he at last consented to step with me into the beautiful garden below, in the delicious shades of which we were soon lost.

He was quite a youth, two or three years younger than I, and in any other country he might still have been considered a mere boy; so that I did not anticipate much opposition to my plans on his part. I therefore entered into the subject at once, and one after another I displayed before him all my plans of future greatness and power. I offered him untold wealth; although I did not possess a single silver piece of my own! The first post in the palace! I unfolded before his eyes golden visions of glory and fame, and promised him beforehand all he should ever ask me, if he would only speak for me to the prince, and arrange in some way or other that we might meet sometimes in secret, in order that Maïa might not suspect anything, and baffle my plans before they had obtained a sure footing.

When I had done speaking, I took his hand in mine, and with a trembling heart and restrained breath, I awaited his reply, upon which all my future depended.

He looked at me for a minute in silence, and



then taking hold of my arm with both his hands, he exclaimed,

“Wretch, you would supplant the noble Maïa in the heart of our prince ; you vile slave girl, little viper, whom she has nursed in her bosom, and who now wants to sting the very hand which gave you protection. And you ask me to help you in your vile plans ! Ah, but you are mistaken ! For, instead of aiding you, I will disclose the whole to Suddhodana, he will chastise you as you deserve for your unheard-of ambition. Do you think I would betray my master ? Learn, wretched slave, to fear me henceforward ; for I know your plans, and can baffle them. My master’s enemies are also mine, and I can crush them as I crush thee now.”

Saying which he took me in his arms and, with a strength of which I would never have thought him capable, he threw me on the ground where I fell heavily, and remained for some time insensible.

## IV.

“ I'll seek for other aid. Spirits they say,  
Flit round invisible, as thick as motes  
Dance in the sunbeam. If that spell,  
Or necromancer's vigil can compel them,  
They shall hold council with me.”

JAMES DUFF.

EVER after that memorable night my life was one of constant fear. I trembled lest Channa, faithful to the prince, should discover to him the plans I had so rashly confided to his ear.

But the days passed, and I could notice no change in the manner of Suddhodana towards me; it was evident that, for some reason or other, the young slave had not betrayed me as yet, perhaps it was because he wished to keep me in his power. I could not tell. I feared to meet the gaze of the prince, and yet all my hopes were placed upon that gaze.

There lived in the city of Kapila, not far from Maïa's palace, a renowned necromancer, a venerable Brahmin and ascetic, who devoted his life to the study of the stars, and who, according to the popular belief, had the power of calling to earth the spirits of the departed, and learning from them the events of the future. To this

man I resolved to go, to learn from his mouth what I had to fear and what I might venture to hope.

One morning, when my mistress was yet reposing on her silken couch lost in sleep, I stole out of the harem by a back door, the key of which I managed to steal, and with a quick step, and enveloped in a dark mantle, I soon arrived at the door of Alkaska's cell.

The Brahmin himself opened the door, and after learning the object of my visit, he conducted me into an inner room beyond the court-yard, where he motioned me to sit upon the only couch which occupied its whole extent.

"Am I in the house of Alkaska?"

The Brahmin bowed in silence.

"The venerable ascetic, the wise prophet who can reveal the secrets of the future?"

"Say rather the humble admirer of nature, the mere machine through which the great Brahma condescends to speak."

"And will Brahma reveal to his poor slave the secrets of her future?"

"Yes; if the curious inquirer who desires that knowledge will make to the supreme God a sacrifice worthy of his glory."

I understood what Alkaska meant by this; so, without saying another word, I took out from under my mantle the little bag containing the silver I had accumulated beforehand, and which at the time constituted all I possessed.

The Brahmin looked at the poor offering with a curious face, and I could see that a look of disappointment passed over his features.

"Small is the offering," he said, "but what Brahma prizes is not the amount of the sacrifice, but the intention with which it is offered, and I doubt not that he will send his angels to aid me in my prophecies."

The old man then retired into the interior of the cell, coming back after a few minutes with a large round crystal like a ball, which he held with the greatest reverence between his hands.

"I shall need some blood of the person whose horoscope you would like me to make," he said, cleaning the crystal carefully with his mantle. After which he gave me a needle, with which I pricked my arm; a few drops of blood came out, which he collected with the greatest care upon the glass ball.

"Will your science, oh Alkaska, teach you the name of the person to whom that blood belongs?"

He looked at it carefully, and then looking at me straight in the face, he said,—

"Ananda, can you doubt of the power of a Sramana?"

I was certain he had never heard my name before, so this began to give me a certain amount of faith as to what he might prophesy.

He then spread the blood all over the crystal,



and began to blow gently upon it. I watched every movement of his with the greatest curiosity, and I could hardly breathe, so intense was my anxiety.

“What do you see?” I asked at last.

He said nothing, but presented me with the crystal.

I took it in my hands, and fixed all my attention upon it. I seemed to lose consciousness of everything around me; I could see nothing but that piece of glass, here and there covered by little red spots. Alkaska placed a little tripod before me, from the fire in which proceeded a bluish flame, and upon it he dropped some herbs and seeds, which changed its colour into a vivid scarlet. All my attention was, however, still fixed upon the crystal.

A mist seemed now to form before me, and through it I saw a figure radiant with glory, and beautiful as the very skies. It was seated upon a throne of gold and precious stones, and around it were legions of angels, holding crowns of glory. In its arms it held a little child most beautiful to behold, and in the dimpled foot which he held towards me, I distinctly saw the mysterious Phrabat, the sure mark of a Buddha!

The picture which these two persons presented was not unlike those you have so often seen of the virgin and her divine son, only that they hardly looked like human beings at all, so

beautiful and ethereal were their forms, and so radiant their countenances.

As I looked closely upon this vision, the mist seemed gradually to disperse, and soon I was able to recognise in this glorious mother, the Princess Maïa herself, my hated rival !

But the folds of her dress now began to move, and out of them, and as it seemed, from under her feet crept a serpent. A long serpent, of a reddish hue, which, gliding along behind the Princess, arrived in time to the height of her face. All at once it gave a spring, and darting forward its sting, it bit her under the ear.

The Princess turned pale, and seemed to droop, and expire ; but I could look no longer, for in the red serpent, I had recognised my own self, and this discovery made me drop the crystal, which fell heavily upon the ground.

The noise it made as it fell upon the hard stones brought me back to my senses, and I felt as if I had awakened from a long and hideous dream.

I stood up, and rubbing my eyes, I exclaimed to myself,

“ Yes, the despised serpent, which she would fain keep under her feet, can sting yet ; I am not as powerless as I thought ; this vision has given me a new desire, a new hope of success ; the poorest and the humblest can sometimes do as much harm as the great and the mighty.” And then

turning to the Brahmin, who stood in silence by my side, I said, "To the great Alkaska, to whom is given the knowledge of the future, is it not also given to know the secret of life and death? Does not your science possess the secret of some powerful potion by means of which life can be extinguished?"

The Ascetic smiled in approbation; one would have thought that he had almost expected my words by the way in which he received them.

"My science is unbounded; Brahma has no secrets for me; but the sale of such potions as you demand, Ananda, is forbidden by our order; I dare not sell them."

"But surely, in the three kingdoms of nature, mineral, vegetable, and animal, there must be some poison concealed, whose use is not forbidden by the strictest Brahmin; for Brahma himself, prodigal in all, offers to men, both good and evil, and consequently a sure way of ending their miseries. I need the poison for myself. Am I not mistress of my own life?"

"Ah! if you want it for yourself, that alters the case, and perhaps I might furnish what you desire."

"Ah! I thought you would!" I exclaimed, breathing freely once more. "I thought you would. . . . But I want a poison whose presence cannot be traced upon the corpse after death. . . . I would not like my friends to know that I had

put an end to my own existence. You understand ? ”

“ I know of a sure poison whose secret powers I have discovered myself ; it is not a murderous drug whose presence can be detected ; it is simply a medicine which, instead of curing an illness, augments and renders it worse ; it affects any part of the body which is already predisposed, and can be administered through any of the three senses of touch, taste, or smell.”

“ Is the power of this wondrous potion equal on all three ? ”

“ Yes, with some slight modifications. You can either put a few drops in a glass of water, or mix a portion with the oil of a lamp, or sprinkle your clothes with it, so that some portion of it will touch your skin, in all these cases death is certain.”

“ And will it be the same for all ? . . . ”

“ With equal proportion, yes ; its contact to the lips for a single second will be equal to that which in the hand would be prolonged for a whole minute.”

“ By Crishna it must be a dangerous and a terrible weapon this discovery of yours, holy Alkaska ! ”

“ It inflicts death to all who come near it.”

“ But surely your great science must also have made you discover an antidote equal, if not superior in power, to this glorious poison.”



"You are right, Ananda, by the seven Buddhas you are right. This poison has its counterpoise, like all others."

"And how do you apply it?"

"In the same way as the poison, only that it will require double the quantity."

"Would it be dangerous to use this precious antidote too freely for an excess of precaution?"

"

"No, there is no harm in it whatever."

"Answer me one last question, Oh, holy master! How long would a person live after touching an object moistened beforehand with your potion?"

"About a week, more or less."

"And how much would you take for it and its precious antidote?"

"Sixty flowers of gold."

I shuddered as I heard this enormous price, but it did not discourage me.

"You shall have it," I said; "hold it ready for this evening, and I will call again upon you."

I went back again as fast as I could to the harem. The vision I had seen of Maïa on a throne of glory, surrounded by angels, and holding an infant Buddha in her arms, was constantly before me, but I recollected the red serpent, and new hopes filled my bosom. 'I must have the money,' I thought, but how to get it? I had none left. An idea then struck me. I would take one of the princess's jewels and sell it; she

would never miss it, she had so many ; and besides, once dead, she would not need it any longer.

I did so. I stole a ring of diamonds and emeralds, which I was soon able to sell not far from the palace, and in the evening I again entered the cell of the Brahmin.

Alkaska was sitting in the porch of his house, saying his evening prayers. I presented him the sixty pieces of gold he had asked for, in exchange for which he gave me two little bottles. The one contained a red liquid, the other a white transparent substance. . . . It was the poison.

## V.

“Dire was his thought, who first in poison steep’d  
The weapon form’d for slaughter; direr his,  
And worthier of damnation, who instill’d  
The mortal venom in the social cup,  
To fill the veins with death instead of life.”

COWPER.

SOME time afterwards the king, Singhanu, died, and Prince Suddhodana succeeded him on the throne.

Channa continued to be my greatest enemy, although his interference perhaps did me more good than any evil I might have dreaded from him. As he had threatened to do, he revealed the plans I had so foolishly confided to him, to his master the king. But strange to say, either Suddhodana did not believe him, or he was not displeased with my desperate plans, perhaps attributing them to an excess of love for himself on my part. The truth was, that from the moment he was made aware of them, the king began to court my favour, and instead of experiencing any harm from the disclosure of my machinations, I derived more good from that disclosure than I would have done had Channa been faithful to me, and had they remained unknown to the king.

Yet I was still in Channa's power. He might expose me to the queen, and then I should be lost for ever. I asked Suddhodana repeatedly to banish him, or to send him on some distant mission, so as to get rid of him ; but he was determined to keep him, and my power was as yet very slight,—the hold I had all at once taken upon the king being as unsteady as my position.

I could not tell you whether the husband of Maïa ever loved me. I tried all I could to win his heart ; but there were so many women in the palace, and almost all so much more beautiful than I, that my chances were very limited. But as I formed part of his harem, I too was in a certain way his wife ; and at the end of a year I gave birth to a daughter, whom he condescended to recognise, and to name Pastophora, which means, literally, ' dweller in the temple of love.'

After the birth of this child Suddodhana seemed to forget all about me, for I seldom saw him, and when I did, it was always before other people, when he showed the greatest indifference towards me. All my hopes and plans of future grandeur were now based upon my little Pastophora. She was a beautiful child, the admiration of all the harem, and I delighted in the thought that perhaps the angelic face of the child would win from her father what I had been unable to obtain in the two years I had now spent in the royal palace of Kapila.



But new griefs were now in store for me. The queen herself was about to give birth to a child, which event put an end to all my long-cherished dreams. Maïa's child would, of course, succeed Suddhodana, and my Pastophora would be forgotten. I determined to risk everything rather than give up my thirst for vengeance,—or rather, for power,—which had now become part of my very being. Whatever happened, Maïa's child should never be born.

One night I was in attendance upon the queen, who felt a little worse than usual, and was lying half-asleep upon her silken couch. She had dismissed all her other women, and I was for once alone by the side of my rival. A dreadful idea came into my head. Why should I not at once put an end to all my fears and miseries? I had her in my power. No one would ever suspect me. I had no fear of a Divine Providence, or of a just and all-seeing God, who would detain my arm; and as for conscience, I had none in those remote days; for, my dear Walter, I was little better than a wild beast, and my heart was a stranger to all the higher feelings of humanity, which I have only acquired through much suffering and expiation.

I stole as noiselessly as I could out of the royal chamber, and hurried to my room; once there, with a trembling hand, and a yet more trembling heart, for in spite of my great ignor-

ance and violent passions, I already felt a vague sense that what I was doing was wrong. I opened the closet where I had hidden the potions prepared by Alkaska, and out of it I took a little silver box of filigree work. Before opening it, however, I took care to prepare a pair of gloves made from the skin of a lion. I then proceeded to open the little box without any fear, and out of it I extracted the two bottles. I took the one which contained the red liquid, which was the preservative, and with it I painted the inside of my gloves. Then I opened the other bottle, and with a little brush, which I also took out of the silver casket, I painted them on the outside with the white liquid. This operation finished, I threw the empty box and bottles out of the window, and I was not satisfied until I heard them fall into the river below.

I returned once more to my mistress's room and waited in silence by her side, the moment when she should awake, which she did soon afterwards.

"I have had such a dream," quoth she, after a time, "I have seen my child, my beautiful boy, Ananda, for he is a boy and so beautiful! Ah! as beautiful as Crishna himself. He will be a great man—the greatest that ever lived—for Hamadeva, the goddess of love, held him in her arms, and of his own free will he descended

from Nirvana as a ray of light into my womb. All created things testify of him, and he will be a Buddha, for I have seen in my dream all the five portents which invariably precede the birth of a Buddha.

“I have seen the Kamawachara angels in their purple mantles traverse the abodes of men, crying, ‘Attend all ye who are upon the earth ; repent and be not insolent, for the Lord of the universe will be born upon the earth.’

“Then I saw heaven open, and crowds of angels and demons, and beyond the ten thousand systems of worlds, each with its four guardians and one hundred genii ; and out of their midst came the three formless ones, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, and afterwards Brahm himself, the almighty, who said, ‘Be not intent on that which is around you, for the Lord, the jewel, Buddha, is coming unto you, and will teach you his glorious secrets.’

“And as I was seeing all these marvels, behold the flowers in my hand withered. My splendid robes appeared discoloured and soiled, sweat streamed from the pores of my body, my skin became dark and discoloured ; I could not rest at ease on my couch, and I awoke.

“This you see, my faithful Ananda, are the five sure signs that my child will be a Buddha, and I shall be the happiest of queens.”

Saying which she lifted her hands towards

heaven, as if in gratitude for the dream she had had, and in this position she looked even more beautiful than I had ever seen her before. Her clear blue eyes had the appearance of the blue sky of a summer evening, and her golden locks hanging loosely over her shoulders, looked like an aureola of glory around her fair head.

I could hardly retain the violent pulsations of my heart as I beheld her; but why should I suffer any longer the misery of her hated presence, when I had her life in my hands at that moment?

I stretched forth my arms and pressed her against my breast, how I wished I could have strangled her at that moment! But no sooner had my hands touched her than a cold shiver ran through her whole frame.

“Why those gloves, Ananda? they hurt.”

I was too excited to say anything. I took them off in silence and threw them out of the window, as I had done the bottles and the casket. My work was finished now, and all I had to do was to wait patiently the effect of my embrace.

I passed seven days in the greatest anxiety. What would be the end of it all? But I had calculated badly. Maïa died at the end of the week, as the wise Brahmin had predicted; but, before dying, she gave birth to a child, a little boy, who was named Gotama after the title of



his father, but whom I shall in future designate by the name of Sakya Muni, a name which he has made so famous throughout the world, and by which he is most generally known.\*

I was in the greatest despair. My crime had proved useless after all !

\* For the true life of Buddha read—Le Bouddhá et sa religion, by Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire ; Voyage au Tibet, L'abbé Huc ; Die Religion des Buddha, von Köppen ; The Sankhya Aphorisms of Kapila, translated by J. R. Ballantyne ; Essays on the History of Religions, by Max Müller ; Wilson's Essays ; The Religion of the Hindus, by the Viscount de Lanjuinais ; The Wheel of the Law, by Henry Alabaster ; Legend of the Burmese Buddha, by Bigandet ; Etudes Orientales, by Franck ; Christ and other Masters, by Hardwick ; Indische Studien, by Weber ; The Life and Teachings of Sakya, by Dr Perfitt, published in the *Pathfinder*, Vol. V. ; Legends of Buddha in Hardy's Manual ; Hand-book for the Student of Chinese Buddhism, by Ernest T. Eitel ; Three Lectures of Buddhism, delivered at Union Church, Hongkong, by Ernest Eitel ; Chips from a German Workshop, by Max Müller ; Buddhagosha's Parables, by Captain F. Rogers ; The Dammaphada, translated by Max Müller ; A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, by S. Beal ; Malcolm's Travels in Hindustan ; Prinsep's Thibet, Tartary, and Mongolia ; The Chinese Empire, by the Abbé Huc ; Cosma Korosi, Life of Sakya ; Asiatic Researches, vol. xx. ; Upham's Sacred Books, vol. iii. ; Prinsep's Bengal Asiatic Journal ; Cosma Korosi, Bengal Researches, &c. ; the greater part of which works are published by Trübner and Co., London.

## VI.

“To be or not to be, that is the question.”

SHAKESPEARE.

FIFTEEN years had passed since the death of Maïa and the birth of her son Sakya. During those fifteen years I had remained in the harem of the king at Kapila, where no one ever suspected the part I had taken in the queen's sudden death. The Princess Pachapati, her sister, had taken her place, and was now the queen of Suddhodana, by whom she had two children—a son, Nanda, and a daughter, Ganapada.

This virtuous princess took upon herself the education of her stepson and nephew, whom she kept constantly by her side.

I, too, devoted myself entirely to the education of my daughter, Pastophora, who was now a beautiful young woman, and on whom were concentrated all my thoughts and aspirations. All the tenderest feelings of my fierce and wild nature were devoted to her. I loved her as a lioness loves her cubs, which in that preparatory state of existence was as much as I could love any human being, and I would gladly have sacrificed my own life for hers. But then, it is true, my love was

rather interested and selfish, for in that child were centred all my hopes of future power, not that her father exhibited any great love towards her, but she was always his child, and I was her mother.

Channa had been sent on a mission to Benares, and for the last few years he had not troubled me much ; but he was always my enemy, and I had reasons for suspecting that he at least was not quite unacquainted with the secret of Maïa's death, for the day after that catastrophe he had found under her window the poisoned gloves, which in my confusion I had thrown into the paradise below.

All my thoughts had been running of late upon how to ruin if possible the young prince who in spite of all my machinations, had made his way into the world. I dared not use against him the same means I had employed to rid myself of his mother ; poisoning was too dangerous a thing to be practised frequently, particularly in the little harem of Kapila, where every act of one's life was known. I might be found out, and then all my grand ideas of power would have found an untimely end in one of the darkest dungeons under the palace, or in death itself ; for Sakya was the general pet, and the king, I was sure, would never have forgiven any act of violence against the life of his eldest and favourite son.

This was the only reason that prevented me from murdering the son as I had murdered the

mother, as for remorse I felt none, so low was as yet my standard of good and evil.

As I would not, or rather dared not, take away his life, I determined to deprive him of his happiness by injuring his moral character and his physical strength. For this end I prevailed upon his father, in spite of his early age, to give him an harem as befitted his station and future prospects. I also tried to court him as much as I could, in order to win his favour by means of flattery—a resort which has been used by men to ruin their enemies from the beginning of the world.

But the mind of the young prince was far above all worldly weaknesses, and after a few attempts of this kind, I came to the conclusion that Sakya was not an ordinary man. To give you a proof of this, my dearest husband, I will repeat to you what he one day said to me,—

I was walking in the shady gardens adjoining the harem when I met him ; no sooner did I see him than I fell on my knees before him, as was the etiquette, exclaiming, “Happy the parents of the Prince Sakya, for he will keep all sorrow from them ! Happy the wife of the Prince Sakya, for he will make her heart glad, and keep all sorrow from her !” But what was my surprise when, instead of greeting me, he went on his way muttering to himself,—“How shall I extinguish the sorrows of my parents and of my



wife? What are the means by which sorrow can be destroyed? If I could destroy concupiscence, or pleasure in love, anger, or the desire to injure others, and the folly which causes men to err—if I could destroy the sources of evil, such as arrogance and falsehood, then I might be called the extinguisher of the misery of my parents and of all living beings. For this end must I now seek the way to Nirwana, that evil and misery may be destroyed. I must relinquish this royal pomp, and devote myself to religion.”\*

An harem with the most lovely and fascinating girls that could be found in all Asia, surrounded him. These strove by dancing, music, and songs, to attract his thoughts to pleasure; but all their enticements were vain. He could not find any satisfaction in such things; he had conceived a disgust for all worldly vanities; whenever he could he stole away from his harem, and leaving the lovely houries who had been brought for him from all parts of the known world, he wandered alone, pondering upon the mysteries of nature.

One day while riding in his golden chariot through the gardens of Loumbini, outside the city walls, he met an old, decrepit, grey-headed and toothless man, who tottered along feebly with a staff.

“Who is that man?” he asked of his charioteer; “why does he walk like that, supporting his totter-

\* Historic.

ing and shrivelled body with a crutch? Is it the peculiar condition of his caste, or is it the law of all human beings?"

"Sire," answered the charioteer, "this man is worn out by age; all his senses are weakened, suffering and starvation have overcome his strength, and he has been abandoned by all his friends. But it is not the peculiar condition of his family or of his caste; your own glorious father, sire, and even yourself, will, one day, if it should please Brahma, be in the same condition; it is the end to which all human creatures must come sooner or later."

"Why, then, care so much for the world," quoth he, "when we must fall into the sere and yellow leaf, and move as snails, where once we moved with the fleetness of the roe? No, I will return. Charioteer, conduct me back to my palace; the delicious shades of Loumbini would not amuse me to-day. What is pleasure and joy to me whose body is but the future home of old age and suffering?"

And Sakya returned to his home. Another day, whilst walking with his numerous suite, he came upon a poor and helpless young man, who was nearly exhausted by a burning fever. The youth was lean and squalid; there was no sign of hope or comfort about him; and when the prince inquired the cause of what he saw, he was answered that sickness was common—was, in

fact, nothing more than one of the calamities to which mortals, by their nature, are continually exposed.

“Is this the course of nature?” he exclaimed to those around him. “Let us speed back to the palace, for what wise man can rejoice in his health, when he has before him the spectre of coming disease!”

On another occasion, while on his way to his hunting grounds, he met a venerable ascetic, a Brahmin, one of that race which have neither home nor business, wife nor child, hopes nor fears; one who was as barren of desire as of affection, and who, in accordance with the Brahminical belief, waited in quietude and singleness of heart for all impurity to quit him, so that in extinction he should find heaven and blessedness. The sight of this man gave him the thought which of the two, he or the Brahmin, was the happier man.

“It is true that I can command a large body of slaves to attend me in my palaces and gardens; it is true that the best horses and the most costly chariots are ready at any moment awaiting my pleasure; the choicest food and the richest robes are mine, and yet what does all this avail me if they fail to bring me joy and happiness? what are all these but transitory things which are vulnerable at every point, and as susceptible of change as even the great sky

over my head? Are they anything more than golden links which hold man in bondage to time and earth, preventing the spirit from asserting its true freedom? Take heed, Sakya, transitory things are perishable; in this world there is no permanence; transmigratory existence must be attended by destruction. Ignorance leads all beings astray, and makes them think that to be good which is really evil; it hinders them from appreciating the truth that life is an evil, and it prevents their becoming disgusted, and clinging to circling existence. I will go, I will quit my home and friends, I will give up the pomps and vanities of this world, and become an ascetic such as this, and by fasting and prayer, I will attain the blessed Nirwana!" \*

His resolution was taken, he would fly away from the court and the city, and become an ascetic.

Channa, in the meantime, had come back from the mission which had detained him so long in the holy city, and he now formed part of Sakya's household.

While in the palace of Kapila he saw Pastophora for the first time, and became deeply enamoured of her. She was just sixteen, and

\* Historic. See "Le Bouddha et sa Religion" of Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, p. 12. "The Pathfinder," vol. v., p. 234. "The History of Religions" of Max Müller, ix. "The Wheel of the Law" of H. Alabaster, p. 121, &c., &c.



considered by all the most beautiful girl in the harem. She was tall and graceful as the palm trees of our native country, her eyes were exceedingly large, black, and brilliant as the stars of night, but soft and thoughtful; the natural direction of her look was upward, as if towards heaven, which made her seem as though she looked beyond this world; her long and deeply-fringed eyelashes were as soft and silky as her arched eyebrows. In those beautiful eyes one could read a whole history of love.

Her hair was not long, it never grew beyond her swan-like neck, but it was wonderfully thick, and of a black that might have passed for indigo blue. All her other features were those of perfect beauty, and it was no wonder that from the very first moment Channa cast his eyes upon her, he should have fallen so deeply in love with her as almost to forget for the daughter the hatred he still felt for the mother.

He was now a man in the prime of life, and a man with whom any woman might easily have fallen in love. Pastophora, I believe, loved him from the very first, but unfortunately I did not perceive this secret passion until it was too late to put a stop to its progress, and the fate of the two lovers was sealed.

Things had arrived at this point, when Sakya one morning awoke Channa, who slept in the chamber adjoining his own, and told him to pre-

pare their horses for a journey, for he intended to start that very instant.

The faithful servant, much surprised, did as his master bade him, and half-an-hour afterwards they were galloping along the slopes of the Nepaul mountains, meeting the fresh morning breeze.

When they arrived at the banks of the river Anoma, they dismounted, and then for the first time, did Sakya reveal to his attendant the true cause of his flight.

“I give up the world and all its vanities for ever more, Channa ; henceforward I will be a mendicant, an ascetic, my only property will be the begging pot, the waistband, and the priest’s fan proper to a Brahmin. I know that by doing this I break through all the established laws of caste, but is not the life of a saint preferable to that of a king ? You will accompany me too, Channa, for you will be my ever-faithful brother, as you have been my faithful servant.”

“You do me too much honour, prince,” answered Channa. “But I feel no vocation for the ascetic life ; all men, sire, are not as wise as you are, and I fear by following you, I should go against my desires, for my heart must ever remain in the harem of Kapila, where the lovely Pastophora dwells.”

“Ah, you are in love Channa . . . ! Well, go back to the world and all its vanities, I forgive you. I have no longer any power to com-

mand ; but some day you will come back to me disgusted with the joys and pleasures of the harem. For the most beautiful woman upon earth has nothing to offer you compared with the supreme joys of Nirwana. But go, and tell my father when you see him, that when I have found the Supreme Wisdom, I will return to him and console him ; farewell."

These were the last words of the prince, changing his rich garments for those of a poor hunter whom he met on the road, he proceeded on his way to Ragagriha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, where he intended to join a celebrated Brahmin, who lived in the greatest austerity. And Channa, meanwhile, galloped back to Kapila, where the greatest excitement soon prevailed, on account of the prince's sudden disappearance ; but this faithful companion and friend soon forgot everything in the smiles of his beloved Pastophora.

And now, my dearest Walter, I think I must leave the rest of my story for another night, for morning is already approaching, and the light of day, as you know, puts the ghosts to flight, rendering them invisible."

*Walter.* "Must you leave me again? But you will come to-morrow, my angel wife, and tell me more about our past? Can it be possible that you were ever that wicked Ananda, whose his-



tory you have been telling me? Can it be possible that you ever were so wicked! you who are now the purest, and the most loving of angels?"

*Conchita.* "Yes, Walter, I was Ananda; and if you knew the history of my spirit before that, you would no longer be surprised at my evil passions, for you would see me still more savage, still more brute-like. In a previous existence I not only murdered my victims, but I ate them! Such is the gradual growth and development of the spirit! Now, I would not take any one's life; I could not, even in self-defence, for I have grown out of it, it is no longer in my nature."

*Walter.* "And I was your enemy, my Conchita! But tell me, who is that Pastophora of whom you speak? Have I known her in this life? Can it be possible that I have ever loved any other woman but you, my love?"

*Conchita.* "If you wish to know, the spirit of her who was Pastophora, 2500 years ago, was, in your present existence, the former Lady Carlton, your own mother."

*Walter.* "My mother!"

*Conchita.* "Yes, my Walter, love is never lost, and, as I have told you before, we have long been one family, and have often been incarnated side by side; and what has been the case in our family is also the case in most others; whenever love or



sympathy unites one soul to another, it is attraction to that soul ; spirits are gathered together in groups, suiting their needs. Whatever kind of intellectual life I may be attracted to, there I shall gravitate ; but if there is no natural or spiritual attraction between persons composing earthly families, they will separate in the spirit world, and meet as strangers on earth.

“ But I must leave you now, to-morrow I will continue the history of our spirits through the ages, till then, farewell.”



## NOTE.

WHILST the foregoing pages were in the press, I chanced to see the number of "THE SPIRITUALIST" for September the 18th, 1874, and in it I found a letter from the well-known Prince of Wittgenstein to the editor of that journal, which bears so strongly upon the subject of this book that I take the liberty of transcribing it here, as it seems to me to afford very strong proof of the truth of the doctrines I desire to advocate:—

Allow me to communicate to you a fact, which seems strongly to corroborate my belief in reincarnation, and which happened to me in the summer of 1869.

A very distinguished French writing medium, Mdme. C——, had come to spend some weeks at my house, at Nieder Walluf, and we had asked our leading spirits whether it was possible or not to evoke during the sleep of the body the spirit of a person now alive? Soon after there fell from the ceiling, on the table where Mdme. C—— was writing under spiritual control, a small oval bronze medal, quite tarnished, with some dry yellow earth sticking to it, bearing on one side the likeness of Christ, on the other one that of the Virgin Mary, and seeming, by its style, to belong to the sixteenth century. We were then told that this medal had been buried a long time ago, with a person who had constantly worn it, and who had died a violent death—that this person was now re-incarnated in Germany—that an object which had belonged to her formerly was necessary to

establish between her and us a fluidical connection, which might enable her to come and appeal to us for assistance against a sort of painful obsession under which she was labouring—that her name began with an A—and that we were to call her “*In memory of the town of Dreux.*”

Accordingly, on the following and some other evenings we set to work, Madame C—— (whom I had mesmerised to sleep for better control) holding the pencil: And presently the spirit wrote, in small, hasty writing, “I am here.”

*Quest.—How is it that you are already asleep?* (It was only ten o’clock.)

*Ans.—*I am in bed, ill of fever.

*Quest.—Can you tell us your present name?*

*Ans.—*Not yet. When I wore the medal I was in France. In the reign of Louis XIV. I was killed by a man who was carrying off a lady from the monastery where I was a nun.

*Quest.—Why did he kill you?*

*Ans.—*He did so unintentionally. I had just returned from Dreux, where I had been sent on an errand by our Abbess. I overtook them unawares and threatened to scream; he then struck me on the head with the pommel of his sword, in order to stun me into silence, and killed me.

*Quest.—How did he manage to enter the convent?*

*Ans.—*By bribing the man who kept our doors, and who feigned to be asleep while they were stealing his keys. When he saw that I was dead he was frightened. He and his servant bore me off and buried me in the first place they found fit. There are now houses built all over it, but my grave exists, still unknown, in a garden.

*Quest.—What place was it?*

*Ans.—*The Pré-aux-Clercs, Paris.

*Quest.—Was the man who killed you a nobleman?*

*Ans.—*Yes; he belonged to the *Lesdiguères*.

*Quest.—Who was the nun he carried off?*

*Ans.—*A novice of a noble family. He had led her already to a coach, which was to carry her off in another



direction than the one he intended to take ; they were to meet again later. So she knew nothing about my death. They fled to foreign countries. She died soon after.

*Quest.—What did your spirit do when it left your body ?*

*Ans.—*I hastened straight to our Abbess, but she was terribly frightened when she saw me, thinking it was a nightmare. I then roamed about the chapel, always thinking myself alive still. I only understood that I was dead when those who were burying me said a prayer before covering my body with earth. A great trouble overcame me then, and I felt it a hard task to pardon them. I have great difficulty in obeying your call, because as soon as I am asleep, I am usually forced to return to Dreux and to haunt the church under my former aspect, as I used to do before my present incarnation. It is a terrible subjection, a constant hindrance to my progress, as it paralyses all my efforts to come into contact with the good spirits who guide and comfort those who are in the flesh and asleep. Emile ! You must help me to free myself.

After some words of advice and encouragement, and my promise to help her, we continued :—

*Quest.—In which street at Paris was your monastery situated ?*

*Ans.—*Rue de l'Abbaye.

*Quest.—Under the patronage of which saint ?*

*Ans.—*Of St. Bruno ; the congregation of the Ladies of the Passion.

*Qusst.—Does the monastery still exist ?*

*Ans.—*Destroyed ; plundered during the Revolution.

*Quest.—Is there anything now remaining of it ?*

*Ans.—*A wall.

[Having, after this, written to Paris for information, the friend to whom we wrote informed us that, after many long searches, he had indeed found out, incrustated between houses, an old wall, which once, as was said, belonged to a lady's monastery.]

*Quest.—Have you, in your present incarnation, any recollection of the one gone by ?*

*Ans.*—I have a sort of apprehension, as if I were to die of a violent death—an injury to the head. It makes me very nervous at times! I see now that it is only a reflex of the past. I also dream of phantoms in monastic gowns, and of murderers rushing at them; also of a spectre in an ancient dress, who grins at me.

*Quest.*—*Do you live far off?*

*Ans.*—In Germany.

*Quest.*—*Is your name a German one?*

*Ans.*—Yes. Those questions hurt me!

*Quest.*—*Do I know you?*

*Ans.*—To be sure you do!

*Quest.*—*Where do you live?*

The medium then begins to trace with great difficulty, “F... Fu...” I exclaim, under sudden inspiration, “*Fulda!*” and at the same moment Mdme. C—— gives a shriek and a violent start, nearly upsetting her chair. She says she felt a commotion, as of a strong electric discharge. I understand at once that the controlling spirit is that of my cousin, the Countess *Amelie of Y*—— who lives in Fulda (a small town about five hours’ journey away by the railway), where she occupies a high charge in a Protestant Chapter of noble ladies.

*Quest.* (after a long pause).—*Why did you give the medium such a shock?*

*Ans.*—I did not want you to know yet.

*Quest.*—*Did your body awake?*

*Ans.*—No; but I was startled.

While we were still (Madame C—— and I) debating whether it were really my cousin or not, the medium’s hand unconsciously wrote down a name which cut short all my doubts, as it referred to a secret known only to the Countess of Y—— and myself.

*Quest.*—*How am I to ascertain your identity, and make sure that you are not a frivolous spirit, mocking us?*

*Ans.*—When you meet me, before long, ask whether I have any dreams, in which it seems to me as if I were killed? I shall say no, and add, that I dream sometimes

of a priest murdered by ruffians. You may also show me the medal ; I shall feel then as if I had known it before.

With this communication we closed our evocations of Amelie, which had taken us several evenings.

A few months later I met my cousin at my sister's country seat. Amelie, as was her wont, began joking with me about my faith in spiritualism, declaring that it was all delusion and deception. I bore her merry attacks merrily, defending, however, my theories about dreams, reminiscences, spirit messages, and so on, till I came to ask, as in a joke, whether she, for example, ever dreamt that she was being murdered ? She answered " No ;" adding, after a slight pause, that, in fact, she had sometimes a disagreeable dream, always the same—a sort of nightmare—which made her nervous and uncomfortable for the whole day after. On my insisting upon receiving the particulars, she said at last, that she dreamt of a Catholic priest in sacerdotal dress, flying from a burning church, with armed men at his heels, who wanted to kill him. After changing the conversation, I took the medal out of my pocket and showed it to her, feigning to have bought it at an antiquary's. She handled it about for some moments, and then began to examine it so long and so closely that I, at last, asked her, " What was the matter ?" whereupon she answered that " she could not understand how that object seemed as familiar as if she had possessed or seen it formerly, although she could not, for the world, recollect under what circumstances."

I now told her all about our evocations ; and she, being very much struck by my narrative, requested to be shown the medial writing. This writing, I had thought, was not like her own. I had known hers only by her letters, in German, written with pen and ink, while the former, traced by a French medium, was written in French. When she saw it she exclaimed that it was positively *her* writing, when she used a pencil instead of a pen ; and forthwith she wrote some words which I dictated, and which proved to be exactly like the original.

She got into a great fright at the thought of her soul haunting an old church, and I advised her, in order to paralyse the attraction, to pray every evening for help to her guardian angel, and to say three times aloud, before going to bed, "*I will not go !*"

Since she has done this, I was informed by my leading spirits that she has entirely succeeded in ridding herself of the aforesaid subjection.

" This, my dear sir, is my personal experience of a fact, interesting enough, I think, to find a space in your columns; and I would be thankful for every explanation of it, given in the non-reincarnationist sense, in favour of the French proverb which says, *Du choc des opinions jaillit la vérité.*

Believe me, at the same time, my dear sir, yours very truly,

EMILE, PRINCE OF WITTGENSTEIN.

NIEDER WALLUF, ON THE RHINE,  
*September 6, 1874.*

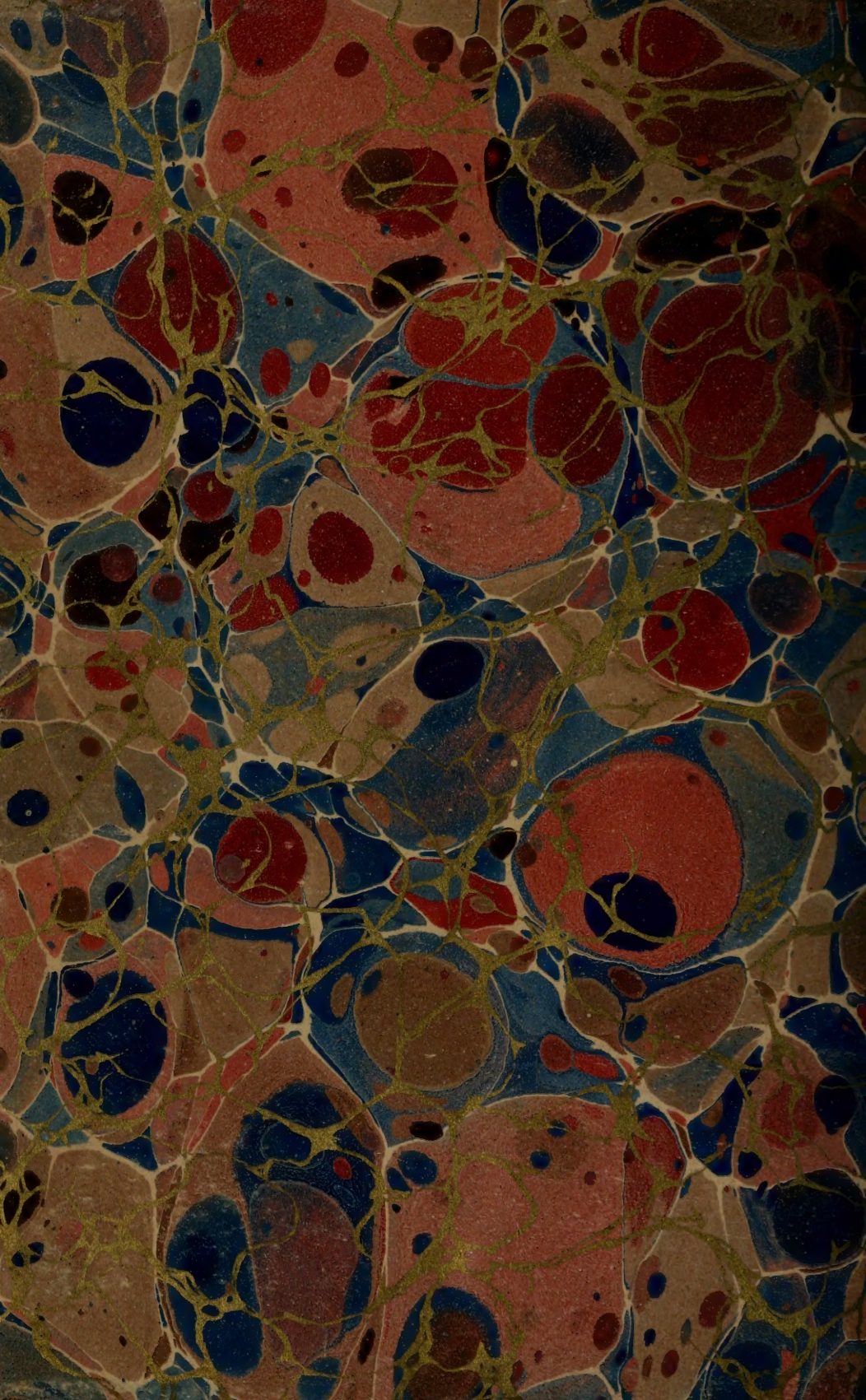
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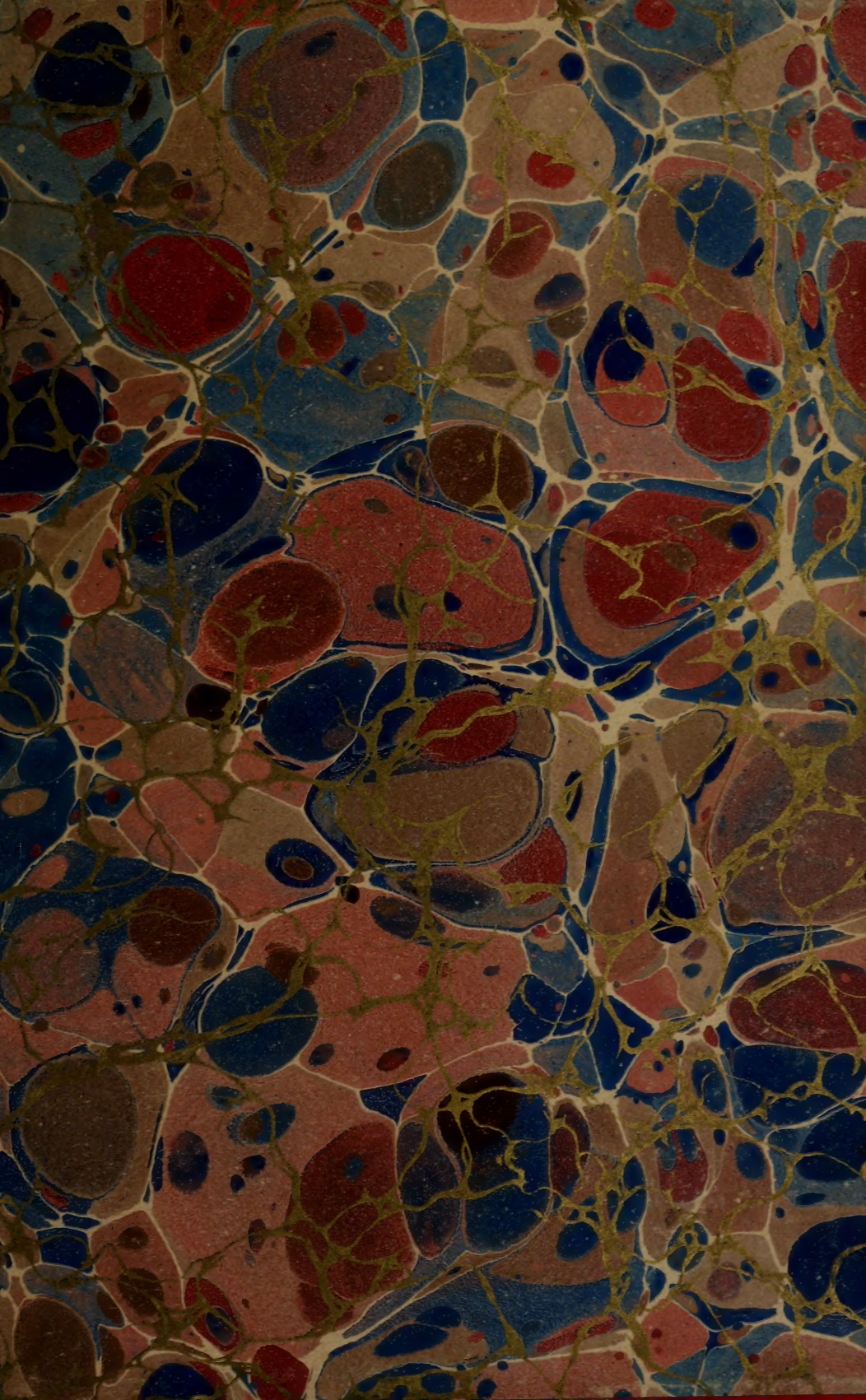














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